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JOHN NEWLAND MAFFITT.

PULPIT SKETCHES,

SERMONS,

AND

DEVOTIONAL FRAGMENTS.

BY REV. JOHN NEWLAND MAFFITT,
Of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

BOSTON.

T. R. MARVIN, 32 CONGRESS STREET.

.....
1828.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.....TO WIT :

District Clerk's Office.

BE it remembered, that on the twenty fourth day of March, A. D. 1828, in the fifty second Year of the Independence of the United States of America, THEOPHILUS R. MARVIN, of the said District, has deposited in this Office the Title of a Book, the Right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the Words following, *to wit* :

Pulpit Sketches, Sermons, and Devotional Fragments. By Rev. John Newland Maffitt, of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned:" and also to an Act entitled "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

JNO. W. DAVIS, { *Clerk of the District*
of Massachusetts.

PREFACE.

IF any writings may plead exemption from the frost of criticism, they are those which seek a shelter under the altar. When men, whose business is literature and supreme object fame, take up the pen, the critical world have a right to arraign their pretensions, weigh their claims, and sit in solemn judgment upon their productions. Yet let the humble writer, whose design is to reanimate the latent fires of devotion, and turn the earth born thoughts heavenward, be spared the rigors of a tribunal which, unlike the posthumous inquest of Egypt, decides the fate of the living as well as the dead.

The minister, who cultivates a sincere desire to benefit his fellow men to the extent of his voice and pen in the brief period of his existence, should never feel the dread of a literary inquisition, damping his zeal, or abating his energy. To a higher tribunal than that of letters is he amenable ; at which it may appear that the boding cry and the raven wing of criticism have induced many to bury in inglorious sloth the talents committed to their improvement.

It is not expected that the pulpit sketches and devotional fragments of one whose head does not yet bear the snows of time, will be prominent sources of instruction and pleasure to age and experience ; yet mature years, it is hoped, will find nothing repulsive to wisdom or the clear views of advanced life in thoughts chiefly drawn from the ancient oracles of God. But the improvement of the young, the blooming pride and future hope of our beloved country, was not unconnected with the design

of these sketches and fragments. There is a season in life when the thoughts are indisposed to encounter the deep things of theology ; a syllogism fails to be comprehended, and a subtle deduction is a weariness to the elastic spirit—yet the eye will rest pleasantly on the lighter lessons of divinity, and the mind will rove with a degree of satisfaction through the green, flowering fields of holy literature, or along the side of “still waters.”

It is possible there may be a chasm in the theological writings of the present day, of the more engaging class of moral and devotional compositions, which these sketches are destined to fill. There is enough of argument in the church, and the “sacramental host” is enveloped in the dust of a thousand champions in polemics ; the boundary lines of denomination are explored and rectified with unerring science, and “Greek meets Greek” on the neutral ground ; the church scarcely can desire a greater deluge of religious intelligence than

that which rolls, at the present moment, to her extreme borders ; yet the questions arise with unusual emphasis—Does the voice of consolation sufficiently mingle with, and temper, the thunder of warfare and the majestic movements of the age ? Does the sound of the summonings, the trumpetings and the rousing up of this last great crusade, intermit to the music of the christian charities and the home virtues ?

To furnish a token of friendship, a gift of affection, a book of devotional sketches for the vestry and the social evening meeting—to extend and perpetuate his ministerial labors among a people dearly beloved,—have been the author's motives that gave birth to this book ; and it is fearlessly as well as affectionately committed to the keeping of those who know how to make deductions for the imperfections of any human production.

Not unmindful of that day, when every work shall be subject to the investigations and

decisions of eternity, the author dedicates this book to the cause of piety; and he would place it near the holy altar of that church whose walls are salvation, and whose gates praise.

Boston, April, 1828.

CONTENTS.

PULPIT SKETCHES.

	<i>Page.</i>
Sketch on Hebrews, xi. 24, 25	13
John, v. 39	25
Matthew, xxvi. 38	36
1 Corinthians, xv. 25	46
James, i. 27	58
Genesis, xxviii. 17	67
Revelation, xiv. 6	74
2 Timothy, iv. 7	85
Acts, xiii. 41	93
Daniel, iv. 13, 14	103
Ezekiel, xxxvii. 4	113
The Judgment Day,	123

SERMONS.

A Sermon delivered Sept. 24, 1823, at the Dedication of the Methodist Chapel, Nantucket,	135
---	-----

A Sermon delivered at Dover, New Hampshire, Fast Day, April 13, 1826,	<i>Page</i> 153
--	--------------------

ADDRESSES.

Address delivered before the New England Conference Missionary Society, June 9, 1825, . . .	169
Address delivered before the New England Conference Missionary Society, June, 1826,	177

DEVOTIONAL FRAGMENTS.

Devotion,	187
An Evening in Europe,	188
Lines on the death of Rev. Dr. PAYSON, of Portland, Maine,	190
Sonnet,	191
The Departed Year.—1827,	192
Sonnet,	194
Lines on the death of Rev. JOHN HUTCHINSON, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who died in Boston, Dec. 1827—aged 21,	195
Sonnet,	196
Dedicatory Hymn,	197
De Witt Clinton,	198
Memory,	200
The Death of an Infant,	200
The Sun of Righteousness,	201
The Remembrance of the Past is Sweet,	202
The Sabbath Scholars,	203
Religion a Source of Happiness,	205
The Funeral	206

	<i>Page.</i>
The Gospel,	209
The Law,	210
Time never returns,	211
Signs of the Times,	212
Religion is Love,	217
To Youth,	218
The Death of Friends,	222
Spring,	224
May,	226
The Gospel of the Kingdom,	227
Maternity,	229
The Buried Alive,	230
Jacob,	232
Saint Paul,	233
The Contrast,	235
Death,	237
Time,	238
Happiness,	239
Adams and Jefferson,	242
Profanation of the Sabbath,	244
Sabbath Schools,	249
Independence,	250
Woman,	251
All is Vanity,	253
The Future,	254
Jesus Christ,	256
The Star of Bethlehem,	260
The Voice of Consolation,	261
The Retrospect,	263
The Bible,	266
The Ministerial Character,	268
The World,	269
The Death Bed,	270
A Portrait,	271
The Glory of God,	273
Reliance on God,	274
The Change of Worlds,	275
Christian Courage,	277

	<i>Page.</i>
The Dissolution,	280
The Influence of the Holy Spirit,	282
The Mind,	286
The Warning Voice,	286
The Ministers of Christ,	287
The Return of Spring,	289
Presumption,	290
Rural Retirement,	291
The Jubilee,	293
The Resting Place,	294
The Minister's Consolation,	295

PULPIT SKETCHES.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.—HEB. xi. 24, 25.

THE history of Moses is the finest specimen of bold, graphic and illustrious biography to be found in the volume of inspiration. The character of this wonderful man is drawn with great accuracy and skill. It is a glowing portrait of the majesty of virtue, and the magnanimity of a high minded patriot and devoted servant of God.

We are not called to the contemplation of a bold adventurer, preying upon the liberties of his fellow men, or glorying in the distresses which his avaricious hand had wrought—nor of another Alexander, waging war with the whole world, reeking with the blood of millions, and towering above his compeers in all the haughtiness of a vain glorious, ostentatious pride. We contemplate a man raised to the pinnacle of earthly grandeur, surrounded by courtly friends, and

with the prospect before him of bearing an imperial sceptre—yet voluntarily renouncing these flattering distinctions, giving up every claim to empire, and casting his lot with a poor, despised and persecuted people.

MOSES.

The early history of this man of God is distinguished by the gracious interpositions of divine providence. Influenced by the God of Israel, his parents preserved the beautiful infant when his life was menaced by the cruel edict of Pharaoh, and while he was exposed to the watery element, in a bark of rushes, a mysterious power provided for his safety ; a royal hand snatched him from his frail bed, and committed him to his own mother's bosom ; and, under maternal guardianship, he grew up in the fear and love of the God of his fathers.

When he had attained a proper age, he was introduced to all the luxuries and blandishments of Pharaoh's court. Philosophers and statesmen were invested with the care of his education. He became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and deed. Initiated in the schools of the Magi, he became an eminent scholar and a profound statesman. As one of the princes of Egypt, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, the presumptive heir of a crown and regal honors, he was placed far above want—he moved in a circle brightened by the countenance of the great, the wise, and the noble ; yet he was not intoxicated by royal favor, nor seduced by the allurements of ambition. The gilded phan-

tasies which floated around him, the brilliant smiles and heartless protestations were incapable of chaining his mind or enslaving his noble powers. High and holy was his calling. He, therefore, rejected every thing intervening between him and his God, or the mighty purpose which labored in his breast—even the deliverance of his Hebrew brethren from captivity and death. For this purpose he yielded himself up a willing victim to all the consequences of an act which, in the estimation of human policy, would appear inconsideration or extreme rashness.

The feelings of many are respondent only to the glare and tinsel of earth. Riches captivate their imagination, titles feed their vanity, the flatteries of the great are music in their ears, the principles of truth and the beauty of religion they either impiously outrage or wholly disregard. An unexpected elevation in life fills them with ideas of their own importance, and a desire to bury forever the thoughts of their former insignificance and poverty. But neither nobleness of birth, the shout of applause, nor the possession of wealth, can confer goodness or implant virtue in the soul. Virtue springs not from earth ; it has not its origin in gold and silver, in honor or dishonor ; and he who would base his fortunes on such frail materials, is building on sand. Art thou noble by birth—has fortune thrown over thee a radiated light, or a gemmed coronet ? Oh, remember there is a nobler ancestry than mouldy parchments confirm. There are riches that can never waste away, and a laurel wreath that withers not. Art thou poor, despised and broken

hearted? The Lord of the universe is thy friend; and if thou hast taken him for thy portion, thou art rich indeed. The treasures of kings are but dross when compared to thine; thy riches shall endure when crowns and sceptres shall have crumbled into dust; thou hast an heirship to an immortal, glorious kingdom, under a heavenly meridian.

To proceed—Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter—he was in the maturity of manhood, fully adequate to the task of examining and choosing for himself when he took this decisive and honorable step. He was, says the inspired historian, full forty years of age—a period in the life of man when ambition often usurps unlimited power over the mind. Besides, he was basking in the sunshine of royal favor, and breathing the fascinating air of a palace. The value this great man placed upon these empty, earthly vanities, stamps him at once a saint and a hero. With a precision more than human, he penetrated every principle of their nature, proved them to be false, hollow, unsatisfying; and, spurning their united efforts to beguile and ensnare him, with a manly energy shook off the gilded fetters and proclaimed himself free.

These considerations alone, however weighty, were not the only ones in view of which he acted. Moses, to have acknowledged his title, would have been required to relinquish the religion of his fathers, and forfeit his birthright as one of the children of Abraham. The decided manner in which Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, commands our

admiration. The sacrifice was great—it was unprecedented ! Behold him throwing off the imperial purple, divesting himself of the gaudy trappings of distinction—eyeing the sceptre, the crown, the throne, with indifference ; while from his bright elevation he extends his view to his enslaved countrymen, turning his back upon an impious, idolatrous, yet seductive court, he descended from the eminence of kings with a noble and majestic mien ; he chose the road to the poor cottages of the oppressed Israelites.

HIS CHOICE.

And now we find Moses among the people of God. Here the children of Israel are emphatically denominated the people of God. A more sublime title could not have been given them. The historian leaves the contrast between the subjects and honors of an earthly potentate, and the simple epithet—people of God—to be filled up by the contemplative mind.

The condition of Israel's descendants at this time was deplorable. Their cup was full of bitterness. A lamentation rose continually over murdered innocents throughout distracted Goshen. A deep horror had seized upon their senses. They were despised, trodden down and insulted. Sorely galled with the heavy yoke and bleeding from the lash of their hard taskmasters, they wept before the Lord, and their cry pierced the heavens. Jehovah was not unmindful of their sufferings ; in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them ; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them

and carried them all the days of old. His eye was fixed intensely upon them, and his hand was stretched out to remove the cloud that hung around their hopes. He pronounced them his people—a peculiar people—a chosen nation—a people for whom was held in reversion a well watered, fruitful country—the rich, beautiful Canaan, the garden of the earth. A people whose protector, comforter and guide was the mighty God of Jacob. For as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings ; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange god with them. A people through whom all the families of the earth were to be made glad, and by whose instrumentality the river of life should overflow its banks and refresh the nations ;—a people for whose deliverance Egypt was enveloped with darkness, the Nile crimsoned with blood, the atmosphere darkened with insects, and a realm clothed in sackcloth for all the first born of man smitten with sudden and unexpected death ;—a people over whose fortunes rose a peerless star, gleaming fiery wrath to their enemies, but shedding, over the path of the dismayed and crest-fallen, light, direction and security. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power : thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed : thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

These were the people of his choice. Unlike the soft and effeminate, he chose to suffer affliction with

them. He did not join them for the loaves and fishes, or to gratify a love of ease. No ; he purposed, if he could not break their iron yoke, to share their bondage, participate in their toils, abide their fate ; in short, to cleave to them and them only in weal or wo.

Many there are who mate themselves with religion when she wears a lovely aspect, lifts her head above the clouds, and walks in the high places of the earth ; but when she is arrayed in the drapery of sorrow, when around her plays the lightning, rolls the thunder, and a persecuting world are in arms against her,—then these craven friends are not—they are shaken off by the tempest—the trumpet's spirit-stirring voice hath swept them away.

Not so with Moses.—Were the people of God afflicted—were they universally despised—were they destined to die in the field of battle,—the purposes of his steady soul would respond to their dying accents, and victory or death hung on his lips, was written on his brow, flamed from his burnished shield, and flashed from his spear.

WHAT INFLUENCED HIS CHOICE.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He believed in God. This fundamental principle of his holy religion was deeply imprinted in his soul ; it preserved him from being seduced by the most fascinating lures that earth can hold out to man. It was faith that influenced him in making a prompt decision and a wise choice. His faith rose not out of natural circumstan-

ces; it was not taught in the schools of the philosophers. It was infinitely superior to any thing human, inspiring him with sublime and heavenly sentiments, and dictating a noble, generous and virtuous conduct.

The faith exercised by Moses was, no doubt, the result of maternal instructions. Placed under his mother's care in his infancy, she had a favorable opportunity of forming his mind to a reliance and divine faith in his Maker. By initiating him into the religion of his ancestors, she prepared him to act in the spirited manner represented in the text, and opened the way for an elevation of character unattainable on worldly principles, or through means unsanctioned by divine providence.

By faith he was taught to despise empty and unavailing honors—honors limited in their duration, unsatisfying in their nature, and pernicious in their consequences—pleasures that like the tender flowrets of spring look lovely and inviting for a season, but soon wither and die. The faith by which Moses was influenced, not only produced these extraordinary results, but it also opened upon his soul the visions of immortality. By faith he passed into the holy of holies, and stood, in the perceptions of a sanctified mind, before that great Being, who is invisible to material organs. There he beheld the glorious recompense, the substantial reward, the eternal rest, the heavenly inheritance. He had respect to these—they were esteemed worthy his chief regard and most ardent love—objects for which no sacrifice was too dear

or too great to hazard. The renown and celebrity he obtained as the saviour, legislator, and chief of a mighty nation, were not thrown into the scale. They had no connexion with the faith eulogized by the Apostle. They occupy a distinct and separate place in the history of Moses. He acted in view of eternal things, in reference to a future state, and under the superintendence and direction of unerring wisdom. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith is the Christian's shield ; while covered with this armor he remains secure—the malignant arrows of sin and satan fall harmless at his feet. Faith nerves the Christian with superhuman energy ; and gives him strength to remove mountains. The dashings of the huge billows and the frantic ravings of the tempest are breasted by him who reposes unbounded confidence in the rock of his salvation ; and, at last, having overcome all enemies, his song of praise echoes from the cloudless towers of the New Jerusalem.

By faith the ancients acquired a knowledge of the true God, and obtained a good report. Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God. By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain—Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Abraham by faith journeyed into a strange land, not knowing whither he went. By faith Isaac was offered up—Jacob and Esau blessed concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob when he was dying blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith the walls of Jericho were levelled with their foundations. Actuated and upheld by this pre-eminently powerful principle, millions of martyrs have cheerfully suffered the spoiling of their goods, and even laid down their lives with joy.

From the illustrious examples we have adduced we learn that, without the faith of the Gospel,

“ Were we possessors of the earth,
And called the stars our own,”—

we should be poor indeed—our hopes of heaven groundless and our wishes vain.

We also learn that decision is a very important and necessary ingredient in the character of him who would be on the Lord's side. Fluctuating principles are valueless. To halt between God and mammon is a mark of weakness and a sure prelude to destruction. If the Lord be God, serve him. Let us, then, be prompt and decided, firm to our purpose, and altogether persuaded to be Christians.

Self-denial is another lesson we are taught by the conduct of Moses. It is essentially necessary to our happiness. If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me, are the words of Jesus. Without this we cannot obtain the friendship of God. When self rules, anarchy is abroad, religion is despised, and the Almighty disregarded ; but when this usurper is dethroned, and he, whose right it is to reign, ascends the throne of our

affections, order and peace are restored—the soul breathes a pure atmosphere, and holds glorious communion with a present God.

Finally—the picture which we have endeavoured to sketch should make deep impressions on the mind. The assemblage of virtues which adorn the character of Moses, the brilliant and the mild, blended together in sweet harmony, are worthy of the noblest emulation and the highest praise. Although we may never rise to the same eminence with this Bible saint, or be called upon to make such great sacrifices, we cannot expect to live even a brief life without passing through waters of affliction and being tried by the strongest temptations. In the humbler walks of life, where the current seems to run smoothly, men experience the usual portion of sorrow and suffering as their entailed inheritance. At such times the strength of religious principle is a powerful and necessary auxiliary in guarding the heart and influencing the practice. Without it we are involved in perplexity and doubt, left to the uncontrolled exercise of unsanctified affections and vain imaginations, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. How necessary, then, that we should follow the example of Moses, and secure the friendship and favor of the divine Being by an early and decided renunciation of every thing, however dear, that might compete with a devoted attachment to his religion and laws. We should make our choice, and make it without delay. There are no barriers to obstruct us ; no powerful, inherent inability with which to contend

The throne of our heavenly Father is open to our complaints and cries ; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is at hand to remedy every evil propensity of our nature. The supplies of the Gospel are rich and abounding. By the exercise of faith we may conquer every foe, pursue our journey through the wilderness of sin in safety, and arrive, at last, through death's dreary portals, into the promised Canaan.

Search the Scriptures.—JOHN v. 39.

ALTHOUGH the way to heaven is luminous, delightful, and safe ; yet it is accompanied with trials, difficulties and conflicts. There are many false guides to mislead us, and many enemies to encounter. It is, therefore, important to find a sure direction, an unerring and faithful guide, and a firm and valiant protector.

All these wants have been supplied by the eternal God. Christ, the great captain of our salvation, has trodden the road himself, and conquered every enemy. He now guards and defends all who commit themselves to his care and keeping, and the holy Scriptures afford a sure direction to God, to happiness, and to heaven.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The word scripture, in its original sense, is of the same import with writing. The several books contained in the Bible are called Scriptures by way of eminence, as they are the most important of all writings.

They are holy ;—full of truth and grace ; inimitable in simplicity, and glowing with celestial love to a fallen world. The purity of their doctrines and precepts ; the exquisite beauty, majesty, and elevation of their general bearing,

“ Their great original proclaim.”

They are true.—Their appearance is ancient, and the variety in their style is an evidence that they were composed by different persons, at different and distant times, and yet, in all their parts, they unite in promoting one great object. Bad men could not have written what so plainly condemns all sin, especially when they had a prospect of gaining nothing by the deception but reproach, imprisonment, torture, and death ; and good men would not have deceived mankind by pretending that an invention of their own was a revelation from heaven.

Although they are not in opposition to human wisdom, enlightened by the spirit of God,—yet they rise infinitely superior to its greatest efforts and loftiest conceptions, and are contrary to that corruption of the heart which impostors would inculcate as the means of gaining their ends.

They give an account of various miracles which must have been performed by the power of God, as no man could have done them of himself. Deceptions they could not have been, because they were wrought in the open face of day, in the midst of vast multitudes of people, the most of whom were enemies, ready and anxious to expose the fraud if any such had really existed ; and memorials of them were taken on

the spot, preserved and handed down from generation to generation.

The religion of the Scriptures was, at first, established and supported by these miracles, and has ever since maintained a powerful influence in the world, notwithstanding the numerous and high handed efforts made to destroy it.

There are a great number of prophecies in these Scriptures that have been fulfilled to the very letter and spirit of the text—a most satisfactory and incontrovertible evidence of their truth and authenticity as a revelation from God.

Those which relate to the destruction of ancient nations and cities were recorded in numerous instances hundreds of years before their accomplishment.

The prophecies, having for their grand subjects the incarnation of the Son of God, his life, labors, and sufferings ; his death, resurrection, and ascension, are standing monuments in confirmation of the authority of holy writ.

The prophecies respecting the Jews—pointing out the destruction of their temple and city by the Romans, their dispersion into all lands, their preservation as a distinct people, have been openly fulfilled and continue fulfilling to the present day, to the utter astonishment of all who have doubted, or may doubt, the genuineness of the holy Scriptures as having originated in God, bearing his signature and expressive of his character.

They contain the most important truths.—The character and attributes of God, his eternity, his

omnipresence, his immensity, his wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness, and mercy, are written on the sacred page, as it were with sunbeams.

The immortality of the soul, its infinite demerit, immense value, the vast price paid for it, and what should be our great care and concern in this life ;— these weighty and important subjects, which puzzled and bewildered the best and wisest of the ancients, are here fully explained and distinctly stated.

The holy Scriptures are addressed to all mankind as sinners ; all having sinned and come short of the glory of God ; and this single circumstance alone raises them above price, and throws a splendor over these precious writings, unrivalled by any human production.

They are the words of reconciliation from an offended sovereign to his rebellious subjects, containing merciful offers of grace and salvation. When men, therefore, feel themselves to be sinners, and discover their need of a Saviour, the truth, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is, to them, valuable above every thing else.

The important question, what must I do to be saved ? is here satisfactorily answered ; and the manner, in which God will be approached and worshipped by rational intelligences, pointed out with clearness, fidelity, and truth.

They are full of divine consolation.—They teach us to address God as our Father in heaven, and declare that his ear is ever open to our prayers, and his hand to supply our wants. As a father pitieth his

children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him ; for he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth we are but dust.—What a resource in the hour of need ! What a shelter from the storm ! What a solace in seasons of distress, and in the day of peril !

“ Our numerous griefs are here redrest,
And all our wants supplied :
Naught we can ask to make us blest
Is in this book denied.”

These consolatory sayings of the Divine Spirit, calm the agitated mind in its worst distress. They shed down upon the soul a heaven of love, and fill the ambient air with the breath of paradise.

“ Here the Redeemer’s welcome voice
Spreads heavenly peace around,
And life and everlasting joys
Attend the blissful sound.”

Thy statutes, says David, have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage ; unless thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in my afflictions.

They will endure forever.—The time is not distant when all present things shall have passed away, without leaving a trace behind to remind us that they ever were. The lights of literature, of science, and of the arts, which now dazzle and charm, will then be covered with the shadows of night ; and the flowers of friendship, of home, and of society, shall lie withered and dead upon the turf that covers us. The brother, the friends of our youth, the companion of our joys and sorrows, the children that are dear to us, the possessions we enjoy, the sun which shines upon us, yea,

every earthly good will fail us. All in this world is changing and uncertain. Where can we rest?—Where can we fix our feet and say, this will not sink under us—this will abide forever? The trees are falling to naught, the stones are wasting away, the rivers are hastening to the ocean, the tombs of our fathers are breaking up, the monuments of fame are crumbling into dust. Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever. Heaven and earth, says Christ, shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Here then is something that will remain after the world shall have forsaken us, and all earthly prospects are blasted. These Scriptures change not; their presence will more than fill the void which the absence of earthborn joys has created in the smitten breast. In a word—they will be found inexpressibly precious in the hour of death, in the day of judgment, and through eternity.

THE SCRIPTURES SHOULD BE SEARCHED.

It is Christ's command.—Search the Scriptures, says the adorable Jesus, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

The Apostle writes, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; and he charges the Thessa-

lonians, that his epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

The wise man urges us to cry after knowledge, to seek her as silver, and search for her as hidden treasure. Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom. David was always studying the Scriptures, and describes the righteous man as one whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Timothy was acquainted with the Scriptures from a child. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures. The primitive Christians read the Scriptures frequently, and with great care, and the most eminent saints, in all ages of the world, received the first kindlings of that bright flame, which distinguished them as burning and shining lights, from this hallowed source.

It is a means of obtaining salvation.—The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. What things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

They are compared to a mirror, in which we behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thy law, says the royal Psalmist, is perfect, converting the soul ; and the man whose delight is in the

law of the Lord, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season ; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper.

By searching the Scriptures we shall acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto us.

It is a source of happiness.

“ This world is a region of outsides, a land of shadows.”

This world, though exceedingly attractive, is deceitful, and unworthy of our esteem and love. Its promises of constancy and fulness of joy are empty and vain.

“ We grasp the phantoms and we find them air.”

It is a continued scene of disappointed hopes and blasted expectations ; thickly strewn over with the broken and decayed fragments of the pride and ambition of man. The humiliating truth, that all is vanity, is written upon his fairest and proudest works, while the lips of the dying, and the cold memorials of the dead, announce it in language more than human.

But here, in searching these Scriptures, we shall find true happiness. Here, we shall not be disappointed ; for, great peace have they that love thy law. Their peace shall flow as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea.

They should be searched with diligence, in dependence upon divine aid, and with prayer. The richness and abundance of the mine, which can never be exhausted, are motives sufficiently powerful to excite us to activity and perseverance in his holy work.

Neglecting to search the Scriptures is productive of much evil.—The ignorance and enmity of the opposers of these Scriptures may be attributed to this neglect. They have either examined them without due deference to the high authority whence they have emanated, and the important matter which they contain, or they have scornfully rejected them without even glancing at their contents, condemning them upon the false evidences of others, as weak and as wicked as themselves; and, therefore, their judgment, in regard to these holy writings, is wholly worthless, beneath the attention of rational and thinking men.

Some have pretended that searching the Scriptures is the grand cause of the many false and groundless notions which prevail among men, and of the dreadful persecutions which blot the pages of church history. The contrary, however, may be asserted without danger of being fairly disproved. A cloud of witnesses there are, even of those who had been once the proudest champions in the enemy's ranks, to establish the truth that searching the Scriptures, with an humble, penitent, lowly and contrite heart, is conducive of health to the soul, light to the understanding, and peace to the mind. Many of these had been formerly well acquainted with the letter of the Scriptures, had searched them with proud hearts, and with a fixed resolution not to be convinced by their reasonings or subdued by their threatenings. They had summoned them to the bar of reason, decorated with the insignia of philosophy, and there branded them with infamy; but when their prospects in life changed,—when the

dungeon and the scaffold stood before them,—when death and eternity stared them in the face, and earth and worlds were sinking,—with what eager haste they fled to these strong holds for help ! with what ravishing joy they clasped and clung to the sacred truths they had once despised !

Our Lord attributes the infidel principles of the Sadducees to their ignorance of the Scriptures ; ye do err, says he, not knowing the Scriptures or the power of God ; and in a very solemn manner declares, that whosoever rejecteth Him and receiveth not his words, hath one that judgeth him, even the word which he hath spoken, which will *judge him at the last day*.

In a word—nothing can be of greater magnitude in the gradations of intelligence than what is written in the holy Scriptures.

They are of higher antiquity and treat upon more important, sublime, and glorious subjects than any other records to be found in the archives of the universe. All human productions when compared to them are imbecile, and perishable. The literary efforts of the finest writers in ancient or modern times are eclipsed by the luminous rays of divine light that surround them. They stand apart, alone, and without a rival—a splendid demonstration of God's love to rebellious worms. In perusing them, we hold converse with a long line of the greatest worthies of antiquity ; both worlds are connected, and a vast and illimitable field opened for instruction and warning.

The wisest philosophers, the scholar and the statesman, have bowed down before the majesty of their

rebuke, and have acknowledged, with astonishment, admiration, and awe, the elegance of their style, the purity of their morals, and the grandeur and magnificence of the imagery with which they abound. To these venerable documents they are largely indebted for the great mass of information that distinguishes their noblest works. In a word, the whole galaxy of the arts and sciences have a nearer or more distant connexion with them, as the source from which they have emanated, and under whose fostering influence they have grown up to eminence, utility, and importance. But what ennobles and dignifies these revealed truths above every thing else, is their salutary and gracious influence upon society. Separate from all other considerations, in this particular, they occupy a place as remarkable as it is elevated.

Unmoved by the machinations of enemies, and shining in a sphere where no power can paralyze their efforts, or change their character for integrity, constancy, and active benevolence, they pass through the moral heavens, shedding down their holy light, on those who sit in the valley and shadow of death,—opening upon the mind of man the blissful abodes of everlasting day, without a cloud to intercept the vision, the whisper of a doubt, or the intrusion of a fear to perplex or bewilder.

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.—**MATT.** xxvi. 38.

No language can be more expressive than the words of the text ;—they are the sweet, plaintive breathings of a heart melted into mingled sensations of regret, sorrow, and pain. They are the true expressions of lamentation and wo, interesting and pathetic, and well calculated to elicit corresponding sympathies from breasts capable of feeling and realizing the sorrows of which they complain. They are the words of the Son of God in the extremity of his agonies in the garden of Gethsemane. He had just celebrated the passover with his disciples, and the affectionate and touching manner in which he instituted the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, to commemorate his approaching passion and cruel death, awakened their finest feelings and cast a shade of deep melancholy over their minds. After this memorable scene, he accompanies them to the Mount of Olives and mingles his voice with theirs for the last time in singing a hymn—after which he enters the garden of agony, and separating himself from his

disciples, begins to feel the great bitterness of sin, the full weight of transgression, and the heavy curse of a broken law.

“ He sunk beneath our heavy woes
To raise us to his throne ;
There’s not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.”

CHRIST’S SUFFERINGS.

His body was mangled with whips and scourges ; his hands and feet pierced with nails, and his head crowned with thorns. All his senses, at the same moment, were assailed with every torment wit or malice could invent. * * * * He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting.

Ye careless ones, behold the whips trickling with his blood ! the iron nails entering his flesh, the uplifted hammer driving them through the parting, shivering veins.

Ye who tread in the footsteps of his murderers, and do daily, by repeated acts of transgression, cry out,—away with him, away with him,—crucify him, crucify him ; look upon the Lord of life and glory, clothed in his purple robe. His head encircled with a wreath of thorns, his back smarting from the cruel scourge, his face disfigured and bloody, his heart stabbed through with the point of a spear,—and be ashamed of your ingratitude and rebellion.

Ye sons and daughters of pleasure, take off your eyes from beholding vanity, and gaze if ye can without

feeling, upon the Son of God expiring on the accursed tree ! Behold the bed on which he reclines his weary limbs ! It is not strewed with roses, nor spread with down ; it is a reeking cross on which he lies ! He rests his fainting head on a pillow of thorns. Witness the many hours he hangs by the iron spikes, suspended between heaven and earth, bleeding at every pore, and in the most excruciating agonies.

“ See, from his hands, his head, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down—
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.”

The sufferings of the body, however excruciating and protracted, are trifling and unimportant when compared with the anguish of the soul. Give me any grief, says the wise man, but the grief of the heart. The spirit of a man will bear bodily infirmities, but what shall support a wounded spirit ?

We may have some faint idea of the sufferings of the Redeemer’s soul, from his unheard of sweat in the garden. There is no manner of violence offered to his body ; no man near him ; in a sharp night ; in the open air, and lying upon the cold earth ; yet a bloody sweat hung in great drops upon his countenance, ran through his apparel, and, mixing with the evening dew, sprinkled the earth on which he lay.

“ Oh, Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love like thine ?”

The ancient Greek liturgy touches this subject with great pathos in the following moving petition ;—By thine unknown sorrows and sufferings, by thee felt, but

to us incomprehensible, have mercy upon us and save us.

All the powers of darkness beset him, the sin of the whole world oppressed him, the cup of his Father's wrath, mingled with the bitterest ingredients, was given him to drink.

In the hour of his greatest distress and need, he finds none to comfort him. The Son of God, the innocent Jesus, came to his own, and his own received him not. And those who had apparently taken a special interest in his public labors, among whom he had gone healing, and teaching, and feeding, doing good to their bodies and souls, now cry, not this man, but Barabbas,—away with him—crucify him. In the midst of his agonies on Calvary, they shake their heads, saying, ah, thou wretch!—and, at his most disconsolate cry, Eli, Eli, deride him with, let be, let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

Of his chosen twelve who had been his companions in tribulation,—one sold him, another denied him with oaths and curses, and all, one after another, fell away and left him to his cruel fate.

His Father hid his face from him,—for, upon that dreadful cry, My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!—that cry which moved heaven and earth, eclipsed the brightness of the sun, and plunged the world in darkness,—that cry which rent the rocks, opened the graves, shook creation, filled the angels of God with wonder, Satan's host with joy—which sounded a fearful knell to the guilty Jews, struck their

temple, rent the vail asunder, and sighing through the vast profound, awakened many saints from the sleep of ages—after this most alarming cry, he presently added, it is finished. He then bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

In short, we may behold the blessed Jesus, from his entrance into the world, in the form of sinful man, to his expiring on the cross, and we shall see a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, overcharged with suffering and tortured by cruelties the most barbarous, insulting, and degrading ; yet supported in a manner that clearly proved his nature divine, constituted to bear the sin of the whole world in his own body upon the tree, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself—and whether we behold him laboring for the good of souls, healing the diseases of the body, in the synagogue or the mountain, at the well of Samaria or at the pool of Siloam, weeping over the grave of Lazarus, or restoring the widow's son to life, feeding the multitude, or blessing the bread and wine at the last supper, weeping in the garden of agony, or meekly giving himself up to his enemies, arrayed in the purple robe before Pilate, or bound to the bloody cross, tracking his way up Calvary, or hanging upon it,—we see the divinity throwing his splendor round about him, and wrapping him up in his ineffable majesty, supporting his holy soul in its most horrible anguish, yet so intimately blending with his humanity, that we are overwhelmed in the blaze of that matchless love which shines out the most glorious feature in the tragic scene.

“O, goodness infinite ! goodness immense !
 And love that passeth knowledge ! words are vain,
 Language is lost in wonders so divine.”

THE CAUSE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

The holy Scriptures declare that Christ is the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world—that he was ordained, set apart and qualified by his Father to suffer in man's stead—the just for the unjust—that God spared not his own Son—that it even pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief. Awake, says he, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts ; smite and spare not ; and, therefore, Christ's sufferings have been attributed to the wrath of God. But there is no wrath in God. Such a principle had no existence, before the fall of man, in any creature save the fallen angels. Wrath can be found nowhere, but in the creature that has turned itself away from the Creator who is love. For man was originally created in righteousness and true holiness, without any moral imperfection, or any kind of propensity to sin—free to stand or fall. Yet he fell from this state and became morally corrupt in his nature. Wrath, then, is the issue of disorder, begotten by the sin of Adam—and this, his sin, may be termed the wrath of God, as it was the primary cause of Christ's unparalleled sufferings and cruel death. The wretchedness of man moved the Almighty to pity and to resolve to relieve him ; and there being no other way to do this consistently with his own perfections and the nature of man's case, but by the exhibition of his

justice in the sacrifice of his only begotten Son, he freely offered him up to achieve the great design.

The divine precept given to Adam was, in the day thou eatest of the tree of knowledge thou shalt surely die ; so that when he transgressed the law, sin entered into the world and all our wo, and he became an alien from his God and the joys of Paradise, and his entire destruction would not have lingered one moment but for the promise of a Saviour, who, in due time, was to satisfy divine justice, make atonement for transgression, and open a wide and effectual door for the free and honorable exercise of grace and mercy to the whole world of mankind : so that God can now, through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, be just, and the justifier of the ungodly.

It was sin, therefore, which drew down the thunderbolts of justice upon Jehovah's fellow, rendered her demands great, her terms severe, and her manner inflexible. It was sin that caused all the Redeemer's sufferings, and it was for poor, miserable man that he endured the cross and despised the shame. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are to be healed.

It was to redeem a guilty world from the effects of sin here and hereafter, and to make rebels the partners of his throne and the children of his love, that he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors and bare the sin of many. We, sinners, then, are sharers in the guilt of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the infuriated soldiery, and the blood-

thirsty multitude who insulted and slew the adorable Jesus. We have borne a part in all the horrid acts done to him in the garden, in Pilate's hall, and on the cross.

“ Beneath my load he faints and dies ;
 I fill'd his soul with pangs unknown ;
 I caus'd those mortal groans and cries ;
 I kill'd the Father's only Son.”

It was in the hard struggle to atone for sin that he sweat great drops of blood, and cried out, when heavily oppressed by an accumulation of sorrows—my God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? All this suffering was due to the children of men, by their departure from the living God ; and now, being found in the fashion of a man, veiled in humanity, the stroke of justice fell upon the sacred head of Jesus,—and from that deadly blow which reached his inmost soul, a balm is derived for the healing of the nations—a cordial for the fears of the disconsolate and the unhappy.

“ To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all—
 The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace :
 Who gave his life, what grace will he deny ?”

The love of Christ here shines out with transcendent lustre, while he undertakes freely, and patiently endures the most wretched state of the worst of sinners, that the worst of sinners, through him, may be encouraged to approach the mercy seat and find grace to help them in every time of need. And the eternal, unalterable love of the Father is also conspicuous in giving up his only begotten Son to redeem poor, lost souls from the thralldom of sin, and restore them to their original standing in the creation of God. For it

became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS THAT GROW OUT OF
CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

Man was fallen—ruined—an heir of wrath, and exposed to the inevitable consequences of his sin and folly. Justice sternly demanded his blood—no city of refuge opened its friendly shelter to receive him—no sound of mercy rung through his soul ; but, thanks be to God, for the gift of his Son—through whom man may be raised from the ruins of the fall, the iron arm of sin broken, and a revolted world restored to the image and favor of the divine being.

Darkness more intense than that which skirted the horizon of Egypt, and wrapped the beautiful Nile in a horrible mantle, had fallen upon us, and, under its unearthly shadowings, the destroyer was hastening to execute the dreadful sentence—cut them down ;—but, lo, through Christ, the true paschal lamb, a light breaks out in the heavens ; the night of death passes away, and—peace, good will to man, is heard resounding through the air.

“ In heaven the rapturous song began,
And sweet, seraphic fire
Through all the shining legions ran,
And strung and tun'd the lyre.

“ Swift through the vast expanse it flew,
And loud the echo roll'd ;
The theme—the song—the joy was new—
’Twas more than heaven could hold.”

We are exiles in this vale of affliction—filled with doubts and fears, and treading, like the blasted Cain, an unhallowed shore ; but, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whose redeeming grace the door of hope is opened, while at its threshold stands almighty love, waiting to lead all, who comply with the Gospel invitation, into blessedness that passeth all understanding, preparatory to their taking possession of their inheritance among the saints in light.

And do we pay no regard to these great, illustrious evidences of the causeless, disinterested and unbounded love of God to our fallen race ? Are our hearts unbroken—our feelings untouched ? Is our attention fixed on the transitory objects of time and sense, regardless of the mighty efforts of Jesus to redeem our souls from sin and death, and bestow on us—holiness and heaven ? Can we join our voices to those of the giddy multitude who insult the Saviour ? Can we trifle with Christ ? What ! can we make light of his tears, his groans, his bloody sweat in the garden, the severity of the scourge, and the torture of the crown of thorns ?

Let us trace his footsteps to Calvary ; there let us stand and gaze, pause and consider ! If at such a place with such a scene, we can trifle, what would angels think ! more struck with grief who can tell ?

“ Around the bloody tree they press'd with strange desire
That wondrous sight to see the Lord of life expire ;
And could their eyes have known a tear,
In sad surprise had dropt it there.”

He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.—
I COR. XV. 25.

FROM the earliest period of time, the great ones of the earth have filled our world with the splendor of their deeds of daring and valor. Their names have been handed down the descent of years, blazoned upon the page of history. Monuments have been erected to their memories; the trophies of their victories, glittering with armorial bearings and the trappings of state, have adorned the senate house, the palace and the cathedral. Posterity has paid them universal homage, and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation, have hung with rapture on the stories of their wars, their conquests and their triumphs. But when we investigate the records of their fame and find them stained with the foulest crimes—when we see the spirit of a fell ambition urging them forward in the pursuit of glory—when we find self reigning pre-eminent in the breasts of the most renowned heroes,—our admiration ceases—they charm no longer—they stand before us divested of every high, ennobling quality, and sunk even below the level of the meanest slave.

Weary of those scenes in which each petty tyrant
plays his fitful part,

“ And frets and struts his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more—”

we look away to the records of the Prince of Peace,
and gather inspiration at the throne of God.

THE MESSIAH.

He is king on his holy hill in Zion. He was consecrated to his regal office by a special anointing from on high. The Psalmist, in the spirit of prophecy, exclaims—Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. The sceptre of thy throne is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity ; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. He is uniformly represented throughout the holy Scriptures under the character of a king, and the terms used to show his kingly power are peculiarly adapted to fill the mind with the most exalted views of the glory, the extent, and the prosperity of his mediatorial reign.

Isaiah eloquently describes the Messiah as the child born, the son given, and announces the extraordinary intelligence that the government shall be upon his shoulders—that he shall be called the Prince of Peace—that of the increase of his government there shall be no end.

Zechariah, filled with holy anticipations, cries out—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem—for behold, thy king cometh unto thee. * * * Yea, all the kings shall fall down before

him ; all nations shall serve him. His name shall endure forever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in him ; all nations shall call him blessed.

The Jews from these prophecies, the traditions of their fathers, the writings of their Rabbins and the sayings of their wise men, were taught to expect the Messiah would make his appearance like earthly monarchs, invested with supreme authority and attended with the pomp, magnificence, and splendor of an oriental court. But when his coming did not comport with their worldly notions and views, they rejected his person and mission with scorn and would not receive his offers of life and salvation.

Two respectable heathen historians, who flourished some time before the birth of Christ, have testified that a Jew should arise out of Judea and obtain the government of the universe—and that this was a general opinion throughout the world. It was this universal expectation probably that led the wise men of the east to Jerusalem in quest of the king of the Jews. We may add the testimony of Herod to the fact that the Messiah was expected to reign over the Jewish nation. The extreme anxiety he discovered in his questions to the eastern sages, and his cruel mandate to destroy the infants in Bethlehem, evinced his fears lest the sceptre should, one day, be wrested from his hands by this son of David.

The Messiah is the prince of the kings of the earth. He who wears upon his vesture and upon his thigh this name written—King of kings and Lord of lords.

He sits on the right hand of the majesty on high ; angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto him, having a name given him above every name that is named. Thousands of thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. He is the king of glory—Emanuel, God with us—he who rides prosperously in the chariot of a preached Gospel, going forth from conquering to conquer—the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

THE MESSIAH'S REIGN.

The reign of Christ is mediatorial. He holds and exercises a mediatorial office in his church, among his people, between a world of impenitent sinners and a holy and righteous God. His kingdom is founded on the principles of mediation—Christ, therefore, reigns in his redeeming and mediatorial character, a prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins, and to receive gifts for men, even for the rebellious.

“ Five bleeding wounds he bears,
 Received on Calvary—
 They pour effectual prayers,
 They strongly speak for me.
 Forgive him, O, forgive, they cry,
 Nor let that ransom'd sinner die.”

The reign of Christ is spiritual. His throne is set up in the hearts of his subjects ; it is there he establishes his kingdom, extends his empire, carries on his triumphs, producing righteousness, peace, and joy in

the Holy Ghost, and bringing into willing subjection to his mild government every faculty and energy of the soul.

His kingdom is not of this world. It is unlike all earthly monarchies. The kingdoms of this world are governed by a succession of kings and by human laws. Their wars are of a carnal and bloody nature ; their treasures dross and tin ; their labors are confined to earth ; their objects bounded by time and sense ; their ends selfish, little and finite, and their glory momentary. Whereas, the kingdom of the Messiah always has been, is now, and ever shall be, governed but by one king. Its laws are divine ; its warriors wear a peaceful uniform and wield the weapons of truth and love. Its treasures are more valuable than silver or gold, more durable than iron or brass ; its objects more vast and sublime than it is possible for the mind of man, unaided by the light of revelation, to comprehend, or even to conceive, and its glory is unfading and eternal.

The reign of Christ is perpetual. All temporal kingdoms rise and fall, flourish and decay, and will ultimately perish in the general conflagration ; but the Messiah's dominion is from generation to generation, and his throne is forever and ever.

The prophet Daniel, speaking of the perpetuity of the Messiah's reign, represents that, after the downfall of the Babylonian, Persian and Grecian empires, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and it shall stand forever. I saw in the night visions and behold one like the son of man came

to the ancient of days, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom ; that all people and nations and languages should serve him. He shall be great; said Gabriel, and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. It is likened to a stone cut out without hands, becoming a great mountain and filling the whole earth.

It is an immoveable kingdom. The foundations thereof are laid deep and wide, resting on the rock of ages. It shall flourish in immortal might, unmoved amid the war of elements, the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds; and when the last pillar that supports the universe shall have crumbled into ruins, the kingdom of the Messiah will then appear in all its magnificence, grandeur and beauty, adorned with the trophies of a subdued world, and extending itself over the illimitable dominions of Jehovah.

In short, Christ is a universal king. He reigns in the kingdom of nature, of providence, of grace and of glory.

THE MESSIAH'S ENEMIES.

Notwithstanding the grandeur of the Messiah's reign—his extensive sway, and the great multitudes in heaven and upon earth that render him homage, attend upon his person and obey his voice, there are millions who know him not, and millions trample upon his laws, and light up the fires of rebellion against his government.

Among those who know him not, we may reckon those nations and kingdoms where the Gospel of Jesus never penetrated—where the grossest darkness broods, and where idolatry, ignorance and superstition hold their gloomy reign ; among those who are in a state of active, obdurate rebellion, we may arrange large, distinct classes in the following order,—those nations now under the power of the mystical Babylon, noticed in Revelations,—the broken tribes of Israel who remain obstinate in their hostility to Christ and his mission,—that part of the world which lies under the domination of the arch deceiver, Mahomet.

These form a great army ; but they are not alone in their opposition to Christ and his kingdom ; there are those who glory in their opposition to his person and government, even while they derive their chief comforts and enjoyments from living under his gracious sway. His government and laws have smoothed the rugged passages of human life, have adorned society with jewels of the first water, and imprinted the holiest characters upon all the varieties of being ; yet such is their apathy, hardness of heart, ingratitude and rebellion, they render no homage to the author and giver of these undeserved blessings, nor do they discover the hand that supplies their numerous wants, and covers them with the panoply of a merciful protection.

In a word, from the first entrance of sin into the world to the present moment, the kingdom of darkness has maintained a severe, persevering and universal struggle against truth and holiness, opposing, under the most specious forms and by various devices, every

thing that has borne the likeness of the divine character.

THE MESSIAH'S CONQUESTS.

The success which has attended the arms of Emanuel, from the first promulgation of the Gospel by the seamen of Galilee, is a paradox to an unbelieving world. Although the army of the faithful has been beset by enemies from every nation, kindred, tongue and people—although the deadliest weapons have been called into requisition, the engines of cruelty and power have been marshalled in terrible array, led on by leaders of consummate skill and valor,—the mighty mass has been borne backward—the ranks have been broken, and the proudest champions wounded and slain. The Roman empire was speedily taken in the toils of the Gospel net, and, in a few years after the ascension of the great deliverer of a captive world, she bowed her imperial neck to the yoke of the Galilean peasant. Christianity then ascended the throne of the Cæsars, and its radiant light rose in mild majesty over the dynasty of kings.

Christ Jesus shall continue his conquests until all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and worship before him. In the last day it shall come to pass that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. Then the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, and all Israel shall be saved, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of

the Lord as the waters cover the great deep, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ.

Are there heathen nations dwelling in darkness and in the valley and shadow of death, to whom the angel of the everlasting Gospel hath not, as yet, winged his flight—on whose unhallowed shores the banner of the crucified hath never been unfurled? To these the Gospel shall be sent; they will crowd around the missionaries of the cross, and, casting their idols to the moles and the bats, touch the golden sceptre of mercy and live. The Father hath given to the Messiah the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. The whole world is included in this encouraging promise, and it shall, ere long, be filled with the knowledge, and subdued to the obedience, of Christ.

It may be said there is little prospect that these animating hopes will ever be realized while so great a portion of mankind is given to idolatry and sin. This objection is triumphantly answered by referring to the power of the Almighty and the unexampled success of Christianity. Our confidence is unshaken. It rests on Israel's God. He directs the complicated movements of all worlds. He maketh the clouds his pavilion, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. He holds the winds in his fists, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And can he not frustrate the designs of his enemies, disappoint their vain imaginings, and destroy their instruments of unholy warfare? Have not the combined powers of darkness again and

again been routed by his potent arm? Has he not spoiled principalities and thrones and dominions, making a show of them openly and scattering them like chaff abroad upon the face of the earth? Has he not hurled to the bottomless pit the apostate angels who would have possessed the battlements of heaven and seated themselves above the stars—and is he not already tearing up the foundations of the earth, and shaking the pillars of strength and glory which had reared their proud heads to the skies? Is not the Lord a man of war? Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

The Messiah must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The Almighty, in order to prostrate the pride of man, has condescended to use means apparently insignificant in consummating the subjugation of a rebellious colony. Human energies and feeble instrumentality are employed in God's service. Men are commanded to take unto themselves armor of divine proof, and to go forth to glorious war. Their weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan, breaking through the embattled hosts of the enemy, and putting to flight the armies of the aliens. Equipped from the sacred armory of 'evangelical truth, the soldiers of Jesus shall ere long force their way through every difficulty; nothing shall be able to impede their march until the sacred standard is unfurled in every continent, island, vale and mountain under heaven. What though the heathen nations marshal their idol

gods, the haughty mussulmans display the hateful crescent, and sin and infidelity plant their standards on the very ramparts of Christianity—Christ Jesus shall reign till he hath subdued them all—until every enemy in the empire of sin shall have fallen under his arrows—until he hath plucked up from its deepest foundations the kingdom of darkness, and the shout of victory over the beast is heard thundering through the universe. Then their rage shall perish and their hopes be blasted.

Preparations are in advance to hasten this important consummation. The great battle is yet to be fought. There are ominous signs abroad of an approaching convulsion; the outposts of the enemy have been driven in; but they are concentrating their forces, fortifying the ground they occupy, and making grand preparations for a mighty and desperate struggle. The voice of war is in the breath of a thousand clarions, and the striplings of the house of the Lion of the tribe of Judah are in the field. The King of kings and Lord of lords is advancing to the onset, followed by the armies of heaven. He has entered the arena of battle, and the foes of God and man are receding.

The fulness of the glorious reign of the Messiah is at hand. The broad light of the sun of righteousness, high in the ascendant, will then blaze, in golden splendor, across both hemispheres. The river of life is filling up and overflowing the dry and barren places of the earth.

But, alas, to some the day of probation is expiring. Mercy will soon refrain her humble suing—her voice

will no longer fall in pitying accents on the ear of rebels, and the blood of the slain Lamb will cease to speak better things than the blood of Abel. Soon the fulfilment of Christian prophecy shall be complete—the great harvest shall be gathered in, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

Then cometh the end, when the Messiah shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule, all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all—for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.—JAMES, i. 27.

ALL religions, that are not founded in a revelation from God, may be likened to a world without a sun, or to a dark, starless night. Without that knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, which revelation alone teaches, man is a poor, blind wretch, the child of doubt, uncertainty and despair. To him the garden of nature is a dreary waste—eternity an unknown, vast and unfathomable void,—dark and bleak, and cold,—and not a ray of hope flashes on his gloomy soul.

When man became subject to sorrow, wretchedness, pain and death, the consequences of his apostacy,—and was driven from a lost paradise to wander through the dreary mazes of this vale of tears, the great God had pity on his forlorn condition. He said—Let there be light—and the star of Bethlehem arose ; its holy beamings illumed man's dreary path, and the bow of hope and of promise, circling the skies, cheered his fainting spirits. And now, thanks be to

God, our holy religion spreads its radiant splendors from pole to pole—Heaven's own beacon, reared on high to save us from the dangers of these stormy seas, and light us to the haven of endless bliss.

PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION.

The Christian religion is founded in a revelation from God. It is a bright and glorious light, shining in a dark world. It hath brought life and immortality to light. It is like the orb of day which rises in the east to gild the earth with his glory, and revive nature with his genial warmth. Before the lighting down of its benign countenance the clouds of ignorance dissolve and vanish—the soul of man is refreshed and invigorated—society beautified and strengthened—the solitary place made glad, and the wilderness turned into a fruitful garden.

It is pure, because it originated in the great fountain of light, life and goodness—the benevolent parent of mankind—the preserver and upholder of all things. God is love—pure, unmixed love—the source of this heaven-born principle. The character of God is love, in nature, design, effect ; and love in his operations. The love of God is conspicuous in all his works—it

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives in all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

As the stream partakes of the nature of the fountain whence it flows, so pure and undefiled religion,

as it hath originated with God, is love. It was the love of God that broke the silence in the courts above,

“When the heavenly choir stood mute,”

and winged the blessed tidings of redeeming mercy to the bowers of Eden.

It was love, Almighty love, that clothed the fairest and brightest inhabitant of bliss with mortal robes, and sent him on a mission fraught with kindness to our rebel race.

It was unparalleled love that led the blessed Jesus, without a murmur, through a life of toils and perils ;—that induced him to submit to pain and suffering, and sustained him under the mountain pressure of man’s accumulated guilt.

It was love unequalled—more than man can know or angels feel, that bade him bare his bosom to the smiting of the ruffian soldiers, and bend his sacred head to the savage strokes inflicted by those he came to save.

“Sun, didst thou fly thy Maker’s pain, or start
At that enormous load of human guilt
Which bowed his blessed head, o’erwhelm’d the cross,
Made groan the centre, burst earth’s marble womb,
With pangs, strange pangs ! deliver’d of her dead ?
Hell howled, and Heaven that hour let fall a tear—
Heav’n wept, that man might smile ; Heav’n bled,
That man might never die !”

Here the wonders of redeeming love are brought out and displayed in all their matchless excellences, before the admiring eyes of men and angels. The great Being no longer speaks in thunder from Sinai’s

summit, encircled with his terribleness, and covered with mystery. Calvary has stilled the tempest. Before the crucified, the thick clouds are dispelled. His death has given an interpretation to every dark saying, laid a solid foundation for our hopes, and opened a way for the ransomed of the Lord to return to Zion with everlasting joy and gladness upon their heads.

It is divine love—a love which continually deviseth liberal things, that hath made a rich and ample provision in the Gospel, for man's destitute and perishing family—an infinite atonement—an all-sufficient sacrifice for the guilty, the undeserving and rebellious ;—that hath suited the blessings of the Gospel to our necessities, making them applicable to the nature of our constitution, and entirely sufficient to supply all our wants.

“ Enough for each, enough for all, and enough for evermore.”

It is love impartial—love universal—love that knows no bounds—which opens the treasures of the Gospel to all men, without any respect to nation, rank, degree, or order. For God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, and this grace teacheth all men every where the things that belong to their peace and lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The manner in which these treasures are offered to all men is equally illustrative of the impartial and benevolent nature of pure and undefiled religion. They

are free to all who will accept of them without money and without price, upon the plain, easy terms of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Ask, and ye shall receive—seek and ye shall find—knock and it shall be opened unto you. For our God is rich unto all them that call upon him, and whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast them out.

The precepts of pure and undefiled religion, taught in the Gospel, are expressive of the same benevolent principle. Our Lord's sermon on the mount, is a beautiful transcript of its lovely and loving nature; and the manner in which these godlike precepts are taught and enforced, show that the Christian religion is pure and undefiled, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—a religion, that carries along with it an internal evidence of its divine origin, beaming forth peace and good will to all mankind.

THE EFFECTS AND FRUITS OF PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION.

The effects. If the nature of the Christian religion be pure and undefiled, the effects will be pure and undefiled also. The love of God, manifested to the soul, produces love to God and man. The perfect Christian loves God with all the heart, might, mind and strength. The whole man is given up, and the whole heart surrendered to the supreme control of God, who is love. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and where love is not, there is no true religion. If we love God we shall keep his commandments. For

where true love is, there is willing obedience, and no command of God is grievous—no requirement hard—no burden too heavy ; love will make the way seem pleasant, and cheer the humble and believing in all their pilgrimage here below. Even when the heart bleeds with anguish, and the storms of misfortune beat upon the naked head, this celestial inmate of the bosom whispers peace ; the bitterness of grief is taken away, and the howlings of the storm hushed in its presence. Touched by its magic influence, the enraptured soul takes the wings of inspiration and soars above terrestrial things, till she melts in ecstasies before the throne of God.

Who then would part with pure and undefiled religion, though it should seem obscured by a passing cloud—who would exchange it for the song of the worldling or the burst of revelry ? There is a voice from Jesus sweeter than song ; a hope beyond this world, to which we turn in sorrow ; and though our eyes may be dim with weeping and our cheeks suffused with tears, yet, the sun of righteousness, gilding the distant horizon, gives the promise of serener skies and happier days.

We inherit this love to God only by grace ; nor can we realize its consolations in the hour of distress and danger, or, indeed, at any time, without a revelation of God in the soul. We cannot know God, much less love him, without his Spirit witnessing with ours that we are his children. Let us, then, inquire, has God said to us, live ? Has he opened our eyes to behold the light of the glory of God, shining in the face

of Jesus Christ? Have old things passed away, and all things become new? Are we partakers of the precious faith once delivered to the saints? Is pure and undefiled religion enthroned in our affections and exemplified in our lives? If so, we love the brethren. But how far does our love extend? We should always remember that this principle, as taught in the Bible, is unbounded. We must love all men, if we would obey the precept of love; not those of our kindred, or nation, or particular religious denomination merely: those from without; yea even our most bitter enemies are to share in our charities and sympathies. This is the glorious characteristic of the religion of Jesus. To be his true disciples, then, we must love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

Pure religion is undefiled in all its operations. It can produce nothing unholy. The motives by which it urges us to duty are, like its nature, benevolent, full of mercy and good fruits. It is pure and undefiled before God and the Father. We act under the immediate inspection of the all-seeing eye. He, with whom we have to do, is ever present with us. All things are naked and open before him—even the thoughts and intents of the heart. *Thou, God, seest us*, should be deeply graven on our hearts, never to be forgotten.

The fruits. They are works of charity and mercy, and none are more especially the objects of charity and mercy than the widow and orphan. Actions are the proper evidences of a religious faith. Idle speculations upon the subject never elevate the heart, or

regulate the life. Religion may engage our attention, interest our feelings—yet leave our hearts cold and our hands idle. Virtuous actions are the legitimate accompaniments of genuine piety. We are not to be hearers of the word only, says our divine teacher, but doers also. We must therefore labor to do good ; no obstacles should deter us ; no enemies dishearten us ; no exertions weary us. There are those who call themselves Christians—but their words and actions are at variance. They affect to commiserate the sufferings of their fellow creatures, and like the priest and the Levite pass on without administering one cordial to support their sinking spirits. The widow, the fatherless and the orphan are neglected ; their tears disregarded ; their wants unsupplied, and their sorrows forgotten.

The true Christian is an angel of mercy. The principles and motives by which he is actuated are pure and undefiled before God and the Father ; his actions are a lucid illustration of the excellency of that religion which animates his soul. He visits the habitations of disease and wretchedness—supplies the wants of the poor and needy—sheds the sympathetic tear over their sufferings—points them to the cross of Christ, and supplicates a throne of grace in their behalf.

Pure and undefiled religion, then, is love, in nature and essence—love in all its operations and fruits. It is the fulfilment of all the laws of God ; and he, who is under its divine influence, is a Christian in deed and in truth.

To conclude,—There is nothing higher in religion than love,—there is, in effect, nothing else. It is the foundation of our hopes, the ground of our acceptance with, and union to, God. Without this Gospel principle we cannot know God, much less love him. It clothes the whole man with the beautiful robes of an angel of light. It is the brightest gem in the Christian's crown. It is the very breath of heaven, diffusing joy and gladness to all within its hallowed circle. It brings the soul out into the light of God's countenance, and fills it with unconquerable longings to be emparadised in perennial joys. It is the nearest likeness we have on earth to Him in whom there was no guile. It is the silken cord that binds man to man—the golden zone which encircles all the lovers of Jesus—the *Shibboleth* of the Christian order—the beginning, the continuance, and the end, of all religious doctrines, precepts and examples. In a word, where love is absent, religion is a phantom; profession a solemn mockery, and all our hopes of heaven baseless as the fabric of a vision.

How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven.—GENESIS, xxviii. 17.

THE character of God has been much misunderstood in every age of the world. Men of lovely, irreproachable lives, philosophers, statesmen and intellectual lights that threw a glory around pagan history,—all have felt a darkness surrounding them while contemplating the subject of the eternal Deity. Their ardent minds, indeed, often caught a glimpse of divinity, darkly arraying itself in nature's robes, speaking in the winds, ruling the wide world of waters, and developing the mysterious connexions of cause and effect in the moral world ; yet mind, left to its own energies, unaided by the light of revelation, was incompetent to sketch the bold outline of Jehovah's form as it stood figured in awful relief on the tables of testimony. When the wise ancients saw, as they could not but see, the harmonious movements of nature's panorama, they accounted for the skill and accuracy of its organization by supposing that certain principles attached themselves to matter to guide its devious way and

evolve the unvarying movements ;—others saw God in the sun, moon and stars, and worshipped either directly or symbolically, the whole host of heaven ;—but few, if any, could grasp, in the compass of their thoughts, that God was every where—that his Spirit filled the rejoicing heavens and earth—that it pervaded immensity—that it filled up the measure of time and overflowed the farthest shores of eternity.

Not pagan philosophers only have been ignorant of the truth that God is every where. Jacob was unmindful of this when, weary and faint, he lay down on the cold earth, on his pillows of stones. Some of the recent transactions of his life denoted that his piety was at a low ebb—he had deceived his venerable father—had enraged his brother, and was now a lonely fugitive, as the sun went down and shadows gathered over the city of Luz. Yet God, who regardeth not the pomp of kings, condescended to reveal himself in a vision to the one from whom a long line of kings, and, at length, the King of kings should descend. It is from this wonderful vision rather than from the exclamations of surprise in the text, that the doctrines of this discourse are to be drawn. In language of graphic strength, yet of inimitable simplicity, inspiration thus describes the vision.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set ; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set up on the

earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac : the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed ; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth ; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south : and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

The vision unrolled before the mind of the slumberer, not only the increase of his posterity in that very land where he had laid down his houseless head ; but also many consoling doctrines, that are as well intended to spread their consolations around our minds, as they were to cheer that lonely sleeper.

There is a sublimity in the drapery of vision, or the scenic representation through which the counsels of the heavens descended and left their imprint on Jacob's soul. An aerial ladder was set upon the earth, and, to the eye, it looked like a highway, lifting itself upwards. The sight followed the majestic pathway until it passed the stars and struck the empyrean near

by the throne of God. A living light burned along its unmeasurable distances, casting a silvery ray on Jacob's forehead—the beautiful beings of a better world ascended and descended ; but, far more beautiful, blending loveliness with the intensely severe beauty of holiness, the Lord stood above it. Happy slumberer ! the eye of thy God is upon thee, the night of thy doubt—thy darkness—thy backsliding shall turn into the compressed splendors of immortal day, before the kindlings of that glorious vision which is full upon thee.

The doctrine of the providence of God is seen distinctly amidst the glowing imagery of this vision. The Lord stood above it. Angels might ascend and descend on a ladder that connected earth to heaven ; the songs of the upper world might linger on the night winds of Judea, and the fragrance of the celestial Eden burden the softly breathing zephyr, yet unless the Lord stood above all worlds, directing all the movements of nature's empire, and overruling the far wider empire of mind, small would be the Christian's hope, and diminutive the streams of his consolation. But now he knows—not only that his Redeemer liveth and that in the latter day he shall stand upon the earth—that his own eyes shall see him for himself,—but he knows that every event of his life is under a wise direction—that although the storm may rave—the frantic ocean change its dark, deep blue to foaming whiteness—the gallant bark under the frowning horrors of a preternatural darkness, may rush where the mad waters and eternal rocks, front to front, wage perpetual

warfare,—yet the long sought haven shall lift up its placid waves beyond the boundaries of storm, and the weather beaten, dismantled voyager shall open his eyes upon the sunny isles. The Lord is at the helm.

The immortality of the soul, is another impressive doctrine taught by this vision. A voice sweeter than the harmonies of heaven rolled down the glorious pathway, and fell like measured numbers on the sleeper's ear,—*I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac.* Could the ancient heathens only have heard these words, they would have engraved them deeply on the unwasting face of the pyramids, they would have blazed in letters of gold on the temple of Delphos, and been indented in the caverned rocks of Avernus. *God of Abraham*—that faithful man whose bones had long rested in the vale of Mamre ; and *God is the God of the living and not of the dead.* How comforting the truth to him who sees the “ desire of his eyes ” wasting under the power of disease, and feels the voice of the iron tongue of time on the pulsations of his heart, telling him that her hours are all numbered ;—and when the broken flower has drooped to the earth, and its fragrance has exhaled with the sunbeam, with what a tender overflowing of heart he commits the angel spirit into the hands of the *God of Abraham !* Go, says he, lovely one—we meet again—we meet again—thou art not dead, but sleepest.

The faithfulness of God, is another doctrine taught in the vision. *Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring*

thee again into this land : for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken. So the Christian, in every vicissitude of life, rests himself upon the promises and sets his seal to their precious truth. He takes God at his word, and does not fear what man can do against him. The bonds of commercial establishments, the credit of national stocks, or the securities of banks may all fail, and chilling poverty, with unwelcome tread, may eject the dweller in palaces,—yet the promises of God shall never fail, though the earth should resolve to its original elements, and the pure heavens pass away.

Another beautiful doctrine derived from this vision, is, the ministry of angels. Napoleon may have been thought enthusiastic or visionary when he expressed his belief that he was attended, on his high destinies, by his guardian genius ; yet his belief becomes, to the mind of a Christian, a certainty. The forms of the heavenly ones, unseen indeed by mortal eyes, crowd the region of atmosphere where we dwell—on glorious errands of love they wing the aerial ocean, where countless systems swim in inconceivable grandeur—swifter than the rays of light they dart upon our earth, and minister to the saints. They often appeared at noonday, or at even, to the patriarchs—they were seen ascending and descending on the ladder of vision ; the prophet of the Lord, when beleaguered by his enemies, prayed that the veil might be lifted from the eyes of his faithful servant, when lo ; the hills were crowned with heavenly squadrons, surrounding the man of God.

Passing by the promise of a Saviour so clearly denoted in this vision, that it must have shone like a beacon light to the succeeding generations of the Jewish church,—time will only permit the remark, that a contemplation of these gracious words, fill the human soul with humility and deep feelings of reverence. How dreadful is this place ! will be the language of him whose pale forehead reflects the light of the visions of God.—Here, let us pause ; and although thousands of years have rolled away since the vision opened a shining path into the heaven of heavens, let us gaze steadfastly on its celestial imagery, while it lingers on the horizon of our mental perceptions ;—let us bow in adoration while the purified spirits ascend and descend ;—while a light streams from the upper Eden—revealing life and immortality, and the uncreated glories of the Lord our God, let us say, How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth.
REV. xiv. 6.

PROPHECY is generally expressed in the strongest and boldest figures. There is a divine sublimity in its language connected with the moral sublimity of thought. The text is a most beautiful specimen of descriptive imagery. An angel's form is seen breaking through the distant shadows, illuminating the blue heavens, and stretching his broad pinions over our world, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all the dwellers upon earth. With a loud voice he commands all men to fear God, and give him glory, and announces that the hour of his judgment is come.

An angel is a messenger of God, sent on some important mission. The apostle informs us that angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. A minister, therefore, in Scripture language, is called an angel ; and the angel, mentioned in this passage, may correctly represent a minister of the Gospel, as it is his glorious privilege to have the everlasting Gospel to preach. Ministers are

sent forth to negotiate terms of reconciliation between the sovereign of the universe, and a world in arms. They stand between the living and the dead. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The angel is said to fly through the midst of heaven. Heaven, in this passage, signifies the church of true believers in this world ; but taken in its most enlarged sense, it extends all over the earth, wherever the footsteps of man may be traced, or his dwellings discovered.

Flying through the midst of heaven is significant of the elevated situation of the ministers of the Gospel ; it gives a wide view of the immense field through which they are called to range. The sacred office of the ministry is the highest that men can occupy. The faithful and zealous ministers of the Lord Jesus move through the moral heavens as stars of the first magnitude.

To fly, denotes buoyancy and freedom. He who can claim apostolic authority for preaching the Gospel, is lifted above the prejudices that enslave the human mind. He acknowledges no master save Jesus—bows under no yoke but the light burden of his Gospel ; his views are liberal and extensive ; his mind comprehends the noblest objects, glows with the purest fires, and feels an enlargement and brightness of vision that the clouds of this lower world can neither limit nor obscure.

Pride, avarice, worldliness and the fear of man, are

not inmates of his soul. Raised to a height where the voice of the enemy and the breath of calumny can reach him only as trials of his faith—for no hand raised against him shall prosper,—he fears no weapons aimed against his spiritual peace ;—

“ Whate’er obstructs, obstructs in vain.”

In his eagle flight, overpassing every barrier, he soars aloft, free as air, through the wide prospect that opens before his wondering eyes, and his ardent soul would blow the trumpet of a preached Gospel, to arouse mankind from their deathlike slumbers.

To fly, implies rapidity and power. The ambassador of the Son of God is rapid and powerful in his movements. He sees that man is under infinite obligations to his Creator—that he is a rational, intelligent and accountable being—that he has a great work to do—that the time given him in which to accomplish it is short and uncertain, and that it is absolutely necessary for him to work diligently, now while the day lasts, night being at hand, when our labors shall be brought to a final close, and the business we have neglected remain forever undone.

These truths, so vast, so momentous, with many others of equal importance, added to a deep sense of the value of immortal souls, and his awful responsibility as an ambassador of the great and terrible God,—rush on his mind with a force that impels him to continued, unwearied action. Instant in season, out of season, he pursues the object of his sacred mission, undisturbed by the elements of contention that war

around him. He looks down with a careless eye on the honors and frowns, the sorrows and enjoyments of earth ; while, with a zeal commensurate with the magnitude and importance of his holy calling, he fills up the measure of his usefulness, like the sun in the zenith, diffusing through an infinite number of lesser orbs the illuminating and invigorating beamings of divine instruction, light and knowledge.

His employment is—to preach. Sacred business—solemn service—a work deeply responsible—teeming with consequences which no human arm can avert—affecting the happiness of man to a wide extent in this life, and reaching throughout eternity ! To preach—literally to cry aloud and spare not—to lift up the voice like a trumpet, and sound an alarm in God’s holy mountain. It is to do the work of an evangelist—to tread in the path marked out by him who went about doing good—to enter every open door, and declare the whole counsel of God, delivering his message publicly and without dissimulation—standing up, in the strength of an expanded, enlightened mind, and sincere heart, for the defence of Bible truths—paying no compliments to the vices or follies of men—applying no untempered mortar—singing no syren song, and hushing no well grounded fears. He warns the impenitent, comforts the mourners in Zion, heals those who are sick of sin, binds up the broken hearted, soothes the truly penitent, and gives a fair, true, evangelical account of every man’s state and condition before God, without fear or favor.

His subject. The everlasting Gospel—good news

from heaven to the poor, perishing family of man—glad tidings of great joy—the revelation of God's mind and will in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, through means admirably calculated, by his goodness, mercy and love, to accomplish the renewal of fallen nature to its primeval beauty, glory and felicity.

The Gospel. Christ crucified—not natural but revealed religion—not the religion of the head which is cold, dry and speculative, but the religion of the heart, which is warm, lively and operative—not the religion of the schools, but the religion of the Bible.

The principles of this Gospel are fixed in the immutability of God's nature, attributes and perfections.

The Gospel is not local in its operations, or partial in its acts of beneficence, and expressions of kindness and pity. It is generous, full and overflowing. Bigotry, party spirit, and selfishness, are not its kindred spirits; the floods of contention never mingle with its waters of purity and peace. On the other hand, it knows where to pause, and fixes a point beyond which it cannot go. Vice must not be fostered at the expense of virtue. The lines between them are defined, and cannot be passed over with impunity. Every grade and species of wickedness are at variance with the Gospel; otherwise all its peerless chasteness would vanish. It strengthens, never weakens, the bonds of civil order. It is the great bulwark of subordination and correct legislation—the test by which to distinguish between inclination and duty, and the rule by which to regulate a holy, self-denying, honorable life.

Before those who are ready to perish, the Gospel spreads a rich and ample feast, and invites them to partake of the heavenly viands on conditions sanctioned by the broad seal of heaven. A sincere, affectionate, and earnest offer of life and salvation, it gives to all mankind; throwing wide open the door of hope, removing every obstacle, and bidding every son and daughter of Adam a hearty welcome to its unnumbered benefits.

The everlasting Gospel—because of its origin, nature and extent. It came from the Parent of being; it hath sprung from his causeless benevolence, and is a fair type of his glorious perfections. Who, but the Almighty, could have devised such a plan, or laid the foundation for the display of so much mercy? This Gospel saves to the uttermost. It is a holy emanation from him in whom is all possible excellence. It is able to supply the wants, and relieve the distresses of the whole human race, from its inexhaustable resources.

It is emphatically the everlasting Gospel on account of its bearing on the decisions of the last day, when the destinies of all men shall be unalterably fixed by the appointed judge—its unerring statements forming the ground work of their admission to happiness or sentence to misery—for we shall be judged by this Gospel according to the deeds done in the body.

The extent of his commission. The whole habitable globe is his parish. He is sent to all the dwellers upon earth. His commission is,—go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

The Great Head of the church was the first missionary under the Gospel dispensation. He nobly cast himself into the field in its rough state, when it presented the most formidable obstacles, and was possessed by mighty principalities and powers of darkness. He was, in the strictest sense, an itinerant preacher. He preached in the streets and lanes, the synagogues and market places of Jerusalem—the fields and mountains of Judea and shores of Galilee, without regard to nation, place, age, sex or condition. His successors, the Apostles, thought themselves honored by being permitted to tread in their master's footsteps. When they received the baptism of the cloven tongues, and were fully commissioned by the anointing of the spirit and the power of truth, they scattered themselves abroad over the Roman empire, preaching the everlasting Gospel with a divine unction, attended by signs and miracles.

All ministers, however, are not evangelists. A variety of weighty considerations may limit their sphere of action, none of which can be said, in the least degree, to abate or affect the authority of their commission to preach. We condemn no man for teaching a particular flock, seeing that in the economy of Christianity the preachers of the Gospel are furnished with a diversity of gifts and qualifications. The Scriptures inform us that Christ has given some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers. But still, the Gospel ministry should be, in its general character, a circulating ministry.

This subject teaches us that the ministers of Christ occupy a distinguished station in the world—a station elevated and commanding. They bear the most responsible commission ever intrusted to mortal hands, and the destinies of millions, in a great degree, depend upon a faithful discharge of their duty—plain, pointed, without disguise and without hypocrisy. Ministers watch over souls—for souls that can never die—souls for whom the Saviour gave himself up to shame, and contempt, and death—souls that will strike the golden lyre among the blessed, or weep and wail in the comfortless, despairing deeps of ruin. We hence infer the necessity of a pure ministry. How dreadful is the character of an ungodly minister ! His sermons are charges against himself ; his own mouth condemns him ; he stands over the yawning pit ; from what a height of glory and felicity he must be hurled—how increased and aggravated will be his torments. Let us, then, who minister in holy things, pray earnestly for clean hands and pure hearts, so that, weaned from every unholy appetite, purified from every passion save an ardent love towards God and the souls of men, we may have both worlds always before our eyes, with the songs of the redeemed and the groans of the lost, ringing in our ears, and the voice of God pronouncing the irrevocable sentence.

We learn that the work of the ministry is arduous, difficult and dangerous ; and that it must be prosecuted at the hazard of ease, of property, and of life. Every step of the way is to be contested ; the heralds of peace have to contend with a hostility growing out

of peculiar circumstances. Their enemies are numerous ; the difficulties they have to encounter great, and the obstacles, thrown in their way, increasing in proportion to the courage and fortitude they display. But they fly through the midst of heaven, having a message to deliver to all on earth, which requires despatch,—for the hour of judgment is at hand.

He, on whom the vows of consecration rest, must look upon the lofty mountain of difficulty—the yawning cavern, the steep and rugged precipice, without faltering. Whatever awaits him in his onward course, he cannot turn back. However great may be his perils, and sufferings, they afford no apology for him to relinquish the engagements he has made at the throne and the altar. He has enlisted during the war, entered the field, harnessed himself for the battle, and death can only release him from his allegiance to the captain of his salvation.

The grand subject of the christian ministry is the everlasting Gospel. This is our theme. All our sermons should be fashioned after the likeness, and impressed with the features, of the great original. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is rich in materials to form the orator for God. The depositories of this Gospel are the Holy Scriptures ; these treasures cannot be used too freely in the Lord's service. To be successful in winning souls, we must be familiar with the Bible ; our language should be deeply imbued with its originality, chasteness and beauty. God will always honor his own word ;—even when delivered in weakness, it will go forth accomplishing mighty revo-

lutions, elevating the moral standard of society, breathing celestial odours along the path of life, and chaining down the man of sin; while the subtle distinctions of the schools, the splendid scintillations of genius, of eloquence, and learning, unsanctified, will entirely fail, or fall far short of the hopes that their brilliant efforts had inspired.

Christian ministers realize too seldom in what their great strength lies. Every victory won for Christ is won through Christ—he will have the glory, and be crowned Lord of all power and might. Our sufficiency, then, is of God; our armor and our weapons from his revealed word. It was the strength of the Lord of hosts that rendered David, a stripling with only a scrip and stone, superior to Goliath of Gath, a giant, practised in the arts of war, and armed with sword, shield and spear.

The spirit, with which the christian ministry was imbued in primitive times, is exhibited by this subject in the clearest and strongest light. It was this spirit that impelled the evangelists and first Christians to leave country and kindred to follow a life of unparalleled opposition and difficulty. The presence and the sanction of this spirit is the watchword of the enterprising and the devoted. Reformers, moved by this spirit, burst the chains of an enslaved world. It breathed the breath of apostolic life into the young men who came forth from Oxford college, clothed with armor that had laid rusty for ages. It has not, as yet, forsaken the church. Its redeeming and successful course is not retrograde. We still feel its irresistible and sav-

ing power. The ministers of the true faith are stretching themselves over the field, and varying the mode of attack. Their arms and equipments are becoming less cumbrous, and their manner of warfare more direct and spirited.

Are any found in the ranks of this advancing army—are the feet of any impressing the same path in which the Redeemer of men loved to tread? Let them fearlessly pursue the original purpose of their ascended Elijah, and wear his fallen mantle with an assurance that it is from the wardrobe of the skies. Let them rejoice that such is their noble designation, aside from the reflection that they are numbered with the brightest constellations that ever adorned the christian hemisphere. Comets, in their erratic flight, cause no alarm to the scientific or the discerning; they trespass no law by which the heavenly bodies are governed; they have their path, and move independently of others. So the apparently eccentric orbits, in which an itinerating ministry move, are prescribed by the hand of order, and the truly pious begin to feel the utility, importance, and superiority of this ever moving dispensation of the sanctuary.

To close—may we ever be found on the wings of the wind, flying through the midst of heaven,—never tiring in the work of the ministry, until the voice of the Holy One and watcher summoneth us to mingle with kindred spirits around the throne of God!

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—2 TIM. iv. 7.

WHEN the Apostle penned these words, he was a prisoner at Rome, under close confinement, exposed to the vengeance of the cruel Nero, and expecting every moment to be dragged to the torture and fastened on a tree.

Aware of the speedy termination of his sufferings, and filled with bright anticipations of future glory, he broke out in the triumphant language of assurance, hope, and victory. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

The Apostle's course, which signifies his ministry and life, was difficult, laborious, and full of peril. Abundant proof of this we find in the Acts of the Apostles. There, at one time, we see this champion of the cross opposed by the whole council of the Jewish nation, and threatened with stripes and imprisonment. At another time, we behold him in the court of Areopagus, in the city of Athens, where he had been summoned to explain the nature of the enterprise in which

he was engaged, and to account for the unexampled temerity of an appeal which called upon the Athenians to renounce their idols, to abolish their most holy rites, and to forsake their Pantheon for one only God. It does not seem possible for the mind to conceive a situation of greater peril than that in which the Apostle was then placed. He stood beneath the canopy of heaven, upon the bare summit of a rock ; before him was spread out a sublime prospect of mountains, islands, seas, and skies ; behind him towered the lofty Acropolis, covered with all its marble temples, the stately monuments of pagan pomp and superstition. He stood in the midst of the disciples of Socrates and Plato, the dogmatist of the porch, and the skeptic of the academy. There he stood firm and unmoved, enforcing the true religion upon his astonished audience, in open defiance of their law, which doomed to death the man who should dare to slight the celebration of the holy mysteries, or blaspheme the gods of Greece.

He had to encounter the pride and prejudices of Jews and heathens ; and to answer for the strange course which he pursued, and the doctrines which he advanced, before the kings, and rulers, and the mighty ones of the earth. Even all these, great as they may seem, by no means reach to the full extent of his sufferings and peril.

In Lysra he was stoned, and dragged out of the city apparently dead, but speedily recovering, and not daunted by his persecutors, he continued on his way, travelling through a number of cities, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, working miracles, and estab-

lishing churches. We soon hear of him again in another city, charged by the magistrates as the introducer of a new religion, whipped with rods, committed to prison, and his feet fastened in stocks, singing the praises of God at midnight, with his fellow prisoner, Silas, and after being delivered from bondage, pursuing his accustomed work with unremitting ardor.

In Jerusalem, where his Master had suffered, all the powers of wicked men and wicked angels assaulted him. There the whole multitude of the Jews, with the Pharisees and Sadducees at their head, thirsted for his blood. And even after he had escaped the popular resentment, forty Jews bound themselves under an oath, by a terrible curse, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul.

Still we have only a faint idea of the dangers to which he was continually exposed. He travelled through frightful and inhospitable deserts, encountering all manner of fatigue, and all kinds of peril—such as hunger, and thirst, and cold, and nakedness, and weariness, and watchings,—preaching to barbarous and savage nations, to the most polished and the most learned, continually tormented, condemned, imprisoned, beaten, stoned ; suffering all manner of contumely and reproach.

Even the elements seemed to wage war against him. He was a day and a night in the great deep. In the island of Miletus, where he had found a harbor from the devouring billows, he was looked upon by the barbarians as some ugly monster in human shape.

All this time, he bore about him the honorable marks of extreme suffering and hard labor. And no wonder, for his course was dark and dreary, full of briars and thorns, overgrown with poisonous weeds, and alive with the most venomous and blood-thirsty animals. He fought with beasts at Ephesus, and, in his most dreadful conflicts with the powers of darkness, was alone and single-handed. And to add to all his other perils from without, he was exceedingly troubled with a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him.

He had, too, the care of all the churches, and, in the midst of his troubles, afflictions, sorrows, and public labors, wrote epistles to most of the principal cities in the world, and continued, to the time of his martyrdom, engaged in the great work of the ministry, knowing nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

To Paul, no place was a sanctuary, no temple a refuge. Wherever he cast his eyes, he saw the swords of his enemies waving, gulfs yawning, fetters, imprisonment, and the passage to the grave.

He bore all these fatigues and trials with patience, resignation, and fortitude. Through the whole course of his ministry and life, he never flinched in the day of battle, nor trembled to meet the onset of a thousand foes. The post of honor to which he was raised, he defended with the bravery of a man and the fortitude of a christian, fighting at the most dreadful disadvantage, amid dangers of an appalling nature, undismayed and unmoved, presenting, in every trying situation, the glorious features of a true soldier of Jesus Christ.

As he had received his commission direct from heaven, he counted all worldly honor but dross when compared to the excellency of the sacred treasure given him by the Lord Jesus. The glittering charms of time and sense he despised, rejecting, like holy Moses, the splendid trophies of aspiring fame. It was the excellency of the religion of Jesus, disclosed to his mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, that won his great soul, and spurred him on to victory and conquest.

He, therefore, laid aside every weight and hindrance, that might encumber him in his arduous work, suffered himself to be stripped for the race and harnessed for the battle, and girding up his loins, resolved in the strength of Israel's God, to tread in the footsteps of that same Jesus he once persecuted to death in the persons of his followers. Throwing himself on the resources of his own mind, buoyed up by the spirit of the holy prophets, which had fallen on him at his first induction to the holy office, he moved forward through danger and suffering, not anxious to avoid either if in the path of duty, tampering not with sin, nor trimming between God and the world for gain or ease.

He expressed cheerfulness and joy under suffering. We are troubled, says he, on every side, yet not discouraged ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed. I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's

sake. His language at Ephesus, on taking an affecting leave of his brethren, was expressive of the elevated state of his mind. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions await me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy. And when passing through Cesarea, he appeared in the same interesting light.—What mean ye, says he, to weep and break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

He was gloriously successful to the end of his course, because the hand of the Lord was with him. This is evident from the repeated assurances which God gave him of almighty strength, support, and guidance.—In visions of the night, angels appeared to strengthen his mind against the assaults of every enemy, bidding him be of good cheer. The divine agency rendered him invincible, as well as patient and resigned, under suffering, strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man. What or whom should he fear?

“For he had wings, that neither sickness, pain,
Nor penury could cripple or confine;
No nook so narrow, but he spread them there
With ease and was at large. The oppressor held
His body bound; but knew not what a range
His spirit took, unconscious of a chain;
And that to bind him was a vain attempt,
Whom heaven approved.”

He was gloriously successful to the end of his course.

The arm of God was stretched out in his behalf, and signs and wonders were wrought by his word. For upwards of thirty years he had labored incessantly in the Lord's vineyard, extending the savor of divine love to every spot he visited, or to which he sent his writings—encompassing sea and land, travelling over a vast portion of the then known world, and extending the Redeemer's kingdom from the east to the uttermost bounds of the west. He marched forth into the thickest ranks of the enemy, vexing them with his incursions. Equipped with armor of divine proof, his only weapon the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, he rushed on his most puissant foes, assaulting them in all their strong holds. As he advanced, the temples of the gods were forsaken, the walls of superstition tottered, and the spreading glories of the cross illumined the palaces of kings. His weapons prevailed against the potentates of the earth, the wisdom of the greatest philosophers, and on the ruins of Barbaric pride and Pontific luxury, he placed the simple majesty of the religion of the Galilean peasant.

Behold this champion of the cross, after he had fought a good fight. See him coming in at the close of the glorious warfare. With what calmness and grandeur he looks down upon sufferings and death! Truly they move him not! The cross glitters on his bosom, his hand firmly grasps the sword of the Lord. A halo of glory encircles his brows—the sunshine of eternity gleams upon his countenance.

Happy Paul ! thy sun is going down in its brightness, growing larger as it sinks, like that luminary, throwing its golden splendors far and wide, over distant lands, when itself is no longer visible to the eye. Thus departed this Prince of Apostles from the field of missionary enterprise, crowned with the laurels of victory and glory, to reap an eternal reward in the church triumphant above.

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish : for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.—*ACTS, xiii. 41.*

THE work here spoken of is the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ. This glorious work originated in the benevolent purpose of the divine mind ; it was made known immediately after the apostacy of our first parents. In the fulness of time, a Saviour was to appear, in the nature of man, and become a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and open a way for our restoration and recovery from the ruins of the fall. This is properly the work of God, because he is the cause of it, constantly presides over it, and will effect its final consummation. It is true, he sees fit, in infinite wisdom, to employ human instrumentality in this great work ; yet it is God that worketh in them, to will, and to do, of his good pleasure. As labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, we dig, we plant, we sow, we water,—but it is God only who giveth the increase. By this work, then, we understand the change of the carnal mind of man, his restoration to the moral image

of his holy Creator, and his preparation for the eternal enjoyment of God's presence and favor.

As a special mean of advancing and completing this glorious work, God has established a church upon earth, against which the gates of hell can never prevail. There was a signal exhibition of the power and grace of God in the advancement of this work on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were cut to the heart by the preaching of ignorant and illiterate men.

Then the prediction of the prophet Joel,—In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh,—received its accomplishment, and the first spring was given to the renovating movements of christianity among the heathen.

Since that memorable era, this great work has been progressing ; it will increase and spread, until the knowledge of the Lord shall have enlightened the whole earth. This work shall triumph over all opposition, until Christ's name becomes great among the Gentiles ; until every nation, tribe and people, under heaven, unite to render him universal homage.

In what manner, and by what means, is this great work conducted ? Not after the manner of men, nor in accordance with their finite views ; but after the wisdom of God, whose prerogative it is to conduct it in that manner and by those means which will best conduce to his own glory, and the good of his intelligent universe. He first convinces the creature of his sin,—then humbles him under a rational sense of its guilt and malignant nature, that he may pardon, sanctify and exalt him far above his original purity and

elevation. It is this that bewilders the proud, the haughty, and the learned, who imagine, because they are unacquainted with the secret springs that move, and the wisdom that conducts this work, that these things cannot be, or are the creations of a heated imagination, the offspring of priestcraft and fanaticism. But,

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.”

All instruments and all means are in his power, and he uses a great variety, such as he pleases, in carrying on his work of redemption. He sends by whom he will send, and often chooses the most unlikely instruments to perform the noblest services, and to accomplish the most arduous undertakings. He hath put the treasure of his Gospel in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man—that no flesh may glory in his presence.

The despisers of this work. The whole body of the Jewish nation did really pour scorn and contempt upon the blessed Jesus, and on the objects of his mission. Witness the manner in which they received the notice of his birth. They contemned his labors, disputed his miracles, abused his person, and took away his life. They were especially enraged at the success of his immediate followers; and with the most barbarous severity, they opposed every effort to promulgate the doctrines of the Gospel, and promote the work of God. Nor are the Jews the only persons who despise this work.

All backsliders show by their conduct that they de-

spise both Christ and his Gospel. Though once they appeared to be firmly established in the principles of christianity, and by a well ordered life and conversation, exhibited evidence to all of their piety and attachment to the cause of the Redeemer ; yet, alas ! they are now turned to the beggarly elements of this world, having made shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience. They have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the spirit of his grace. These are spots in our feasts of charity ; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds ; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots ; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame ; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

All profane persons, such as blasphemers, profane swearers, gamesters, drunkards, duellists, Sabbath-breakers, are virulent and active despisers of this work. It is unnecessary to prove this assertion. These characters constantly carry the proofs of their opposition about with them, and commonly glory in their shame.

All professed infidels are open despisers of the Gospel of Christ. They ridicule revelation, sport themselves at the operations of the Holy Spirit, and laugh at all whom they consider weak enough to believe in the genuineness and veracity of the Bible, and employ their blasphemous wits to burlesque its sacred contents. They not only laugh at christians, but they affect to pity their weakness, and lament the feebleness of their

intellect, as if their own foolish systems, unsupported by evidence, and in direct opposition to the best testimony, were worthy the assent of a wise man, or suitable to be chosen as the foundation of his hope for eternity. They habitually speak of christians, especially the zealous sort, as weak and ignorant. *Well, be it so.* Disturb us not in the enjoyment of *such a blessed weakness.* It has opened to us a constant communion with our God ; afforded us a sense of pardon, peace and acceptance with him ; has disarmed death of its terrors, and given us an earnest of eternal felicity beyond the grave. But, there is a consideration, which is calculated to have more weight with infidels than the present happiness and immortal hopes of the christian faith. Though christians are said to be weak and ignorant, they are found in some respectable company, even in this world. Locke anatomized the human mind, and accurately described its various powers and operations. Boyle explored the secret springs of nature, and developed the causes of many of its phenomena. Newton traversed the starry regions, measured the heavenly bodies, and ascertained their relative magnitudes, distances, and periodical revolutions. These are names which stand first on the page of literary fame. Around their monuments is wreathed the everduring laurel. Were these men imbecile ? were their faculties of a pigmy growth ? in one word—were they infidels ? No ; verily, they were christians. It was the religion of the Bible that blessed them in the decline of life, afforded them more sublime enjoyments than wealth, honor or renown can give, shed its

sacred beams around them in the hour of their dissolution, and cheered them quite through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

We have the authority of scripture for adding, that all men, who are not really engaged in promoting the work of the Lord, are despisers of this work. Indeed, it is utterly impossible to maintain neutral ground respecting the religion of Jesus. No man can serve two masters, says our blessed Lord, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. It is true that many, acting entirely from self interested motives, are instrumental of advancing the cause of the Redeemer, and would not openly oppose it. Others suppress their internal feelings towards this cause, for the sake of gaining an advantage over the people of God ; were it not so, christians would not long be permitted to worship God under their own vine and fig tree, none daring to make them afraid. But all, who are not cordially attached to this work from a supreme regard to its author, are cordially, though perhaps secretly, its despisers.

The true causes of this contempt. Such is the natural ignorance and moral darkness of men's minds, that, while in their natural state, they are incapable of discerning the truth, beauty, and spirituality of the law of God. They are blinded by the god of this world—the allurements of time and sense,—the pleasures, the vanities, the follies of the world, which contribute to darken their mental vision, and call off their attention from the concerns of their souls. The unrenewed man loves these pleasures ; they are exactly suited to his corrupt and vitiated taste. It is, therefore, per-

fectly natural for men to despise and reject divine revelation, because it expressly prohibits their habitual abuse of the things of this world, and condemns sin itself, no matter what form it assumes, or what imposing character it supports, on pain of eternal punishment.

Pride holds a high rank among the many causes of this contempt. Pride is firmly seated in the natural heart of man, and powerfully opposes every thing that threatens its dethronement. Pride is that self exalting principle which reigns triumphant in the carnal mind, and demands universal homage. This pride cannot bear the humbling doctrines of the Gospel ; they are too self abasing ; it will not stoop ; it will not descend from its Babel tower, and receive pardon solely on the ground of the atoning merit of a crucified Saviour. This is the detested point of degradation. This is the offence of the cross. Here the Jews stumbled, and fell, and were broken to pieces. Here the Greeks were confounded, bewildered, and lost. Here the infidel scoffs, and sneers, and embraces his own destruction ; and here the incorrigible sinner gazes, and wonders, and, at last, eternally perishes !

Such are the rooted and deeply grounded prejudices of men's minds, that they will not believe, though one rose from the dead. The Jews, with the most irrefragable evidence before their eyes, remained unconcerned, filled with prejudices, and in the face of the most direct and luminous displays of divine power, rejected the Son of God, and crucified the Prince of life and glory. And, at the present day, let the truth

as it is in Jesus be declared, with the argumentative powers of a Paul, and with the eloquence of an Apollos, supported in every word by the high authority of divine revelation, yet despisers would still remain hardened ; would continue to mock and sport themselves with their own deceivings. They would harden their hearts, and fortify their minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, should shine into their minds, and they should be converted.

The consequences of despising this work of the Lord. They will be fatal. Despisers shall wonder, and then, perish—perish in this life, in the hour of death, in the day of eternity.

They shall perish in this life. The Jews afford the most striking proof, if proof were necessary, of the truth of these awful predictions uttered against them ; they despised Christ, and have ever since been despised themselves. The words of our Lord have been literally fulfilled respecting them, in the most exemplary manner. Not a jot nor a tittle of his predictions have failed. They have been scattered over the face of the earth, and still wander like wretched outcasts on the footstool of God. When the Roman soldiers entered and sacked their city, and set fire to their temple, they wondered, and perished.

The expectations, which despisers, of all classes indulge from the fleeting objects of their idolatrous pursuits, are continually disappointing them.

“ They grasp the phantoms and they find them air.”

Thousands fall into gross immoralities, which destroy their health, their prosperity, their all. The old age of despisers is dreary and comfortless. Nothing is then left them but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Despisers will wonder and perish at a dying hour. They may live without fear, continue for years careless and impenitent; but when the minister of death arrives—when the fearful summons sounds in their ears, prepare to meet thy God, far other subjects, than the trifles of time will occupy their attention. They now feel it is a fearful thing to die unprepared. They wonder why they have lived so regardless of their God; so neglectful of their immortal souls. They can say, O, the *pain*, but not the *bliss* of dying! Where am I going, says the affrighted soul? to what unknown regions?—Eternity is the only answer.—Into whose presence?—Into the presence of God Almighty, the Searcher of all hearts, the God of inflexible justice. Alas! I am going; but I dare not appear before him. I have sold myself for nought, I have robbed myself of a crown of inestimable value. O time! time! it is fit thou shouldst strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled forever! O, for a month, a week, a single day! My frantic soul clings to earth; but in vain—the world recedes—I am shivering on the brink of eternal ruin—I sink—I die—I perish forever!

Despisers will wonder and perish at the last day. When they see the Judge enthroned, and the dead small and great stand before God; when they see

the righteous applauded, and their own proud, selfish and obdurate hearts laid open, and their crimes made known ;—then will their false hopes all vanish—then will their fear come as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind. Distress and anguish shall come upon them, and all the stings and horrors of a guilty conscience shall attend them forever and ever.

This subject exhibits, in a strong light, the infatuation of all who, in this land of light and freedom, know not God and despise his work of grace. To all persons of this description, we would say, in the language and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ,—except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. *Perish*, some of you, arrested by death in the midst of revelry and dissipation, others in the full pursuit of wealth and fame—*perish* out of pious families, under the daily reproof of parental example, at the very threshold of God's temple, from under the droppings of his sanctuary, and the presence of a faithful, heart searching ministry—*perish* amidst the full blaze of Gospel light, and Gospel love—*perish*, although exalted to the gates of heaven in point of privilege, in full view of the mansions of the redeemed—thrust down into the dark regions of eternal despair.

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven ; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit : let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.—DANIEL, iv. 13, 14.

IN the history of man, the existence of an overruling and controlling providence is marked and visible. Its mysterious agency has ever been abroad, and its operations, however misunderstood by the unenlightened, have been conducted on the principles of divine wisdom and goodness. From comparative obscurity and insignificance, nations have at once emerged, and risen to the pinnacle of splendor and dominion. Like the tree figured by the prophet's pencil, they have towered into strength and consequence, and extended their branches over wide regions ; but suddenly, in the midst of all their pride, they have been stricken by the retributive lightnings of heaven, and have been prostrated by the terrible concussion.

The fall of Babylon, the queen of cities, is a striking illustration of the doctrine of divine providence. She had filled up the measure of her iniquities ; her over-

throw was certain, and the execution of a just judgment only awaited the signal of him who held the helm and conducted the movements of all worlds. But his long suffering kindness prevented the stroke of vengeance. She was to receive another solemn lesson from the Almighty in the punishment of the great, the victorious Nebuchadnezzar before the thunder of his arm smote her to the dust.

Various and complicated are the means by which a gracious providence calls mankind to a sense of their danger, while they are knowingly violating the lawful commands of God, and trampling upon his authority. Moses was startled by the appearance of a bush in flames, and yet unconsumed. The Jewish nation, at Sinai's base, trembled exceedingly while its summit was covered with the terribleness and majesty of God. Balaam was arrested by an angel with a drawn sword; and here, a vision of the night troubled and alarmed a mighty king, even while surrounded by his imperial guard. The decorations of a gorgeous palace ceased to charm, neither could the sleepless monarch be lulled to rest by the dulcet sounds of the harp and lute.

Daniel applied the interpretation of this vision to Nebuchadnezzar, and declared that the lofty tree was a representation of the stability of his throne, the greatness and extent of his power, and faithfully warned him of an approaching and desolating tempest—to which no earthly power could bid defiance.

I saw and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. Princes, great men, and nations, are frequently represented in Scripture

under the metaphor of fair and flourishing trees :— Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature ; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches : for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him : the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not like his branches ; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches ; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.

Nebuchadnezzar was universally celebrated for his wars and victories. The spoils of vanquished nations adorned his triumphal chariot, and the laurel of glory bloomed upon his brow. He held his brilliant court in Babylon—a city beautified and adorned with a variety of costly and stupendous works. It measured forty five miles in circumference, its walls were fifty cubits high, and their width was so great that six chariots

might drive abreast upon their summits. It was situated on the Euphrates, was divided by a branch of that majestic river, over which a bridge was thrown, a furlong in length, at each end of which a magnificent palace rose to the view, glittering with gold and precious stones. But these were not its chief embellishments—nor was Babylon considered one of the wonders of the world, till its hundred brazen gates were set up, and the towers of Belus reared their impious turrets to the clouds, and Nebuchadnezzar's noble palace was erected, and the lofty hanging gardens caught the astonished sight. And now, after all his toils, he sat himself down in sumptuous ease, having shot up into the zenith of this world's grandeur, flourishing in health of body and vigor of soul, crowned with glory, and affluence, and having no enemy able to interrupt his repose. Thus, when he seemed most secure, an unseen hand fell heavily upon him ; the cup of felicity is dashed from his lips, and all his joys are, in a moment, blasted. A simple dream fills him with terror and dismay. So easily can God disturb the man of pleasure, whose ambitious projects are bearing the flowers of hope and promise, and, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, overwhelm him with the besom of destruction.

Behold a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven. These words refer to the attendance of the evangelical orders on God's throne, to execute the commands of the Most High. Hence the title of the eyes of the Lord which has been applied to them. They exhibit the superintending providence of God,

entering into the circumstances of life, and taking cognizance of the affairs of men.

He cried aloud. When the Almighty pronounces judgment, whether against nations or individuals, it is announced with accompanying manifestations expressive of the divine indignation. There is a crier sent forth. His voice is heard above the thunder, nor can the noise of many waters drown its unearthly utterance. His anathemas echo along the hills. His invisible tread convulseth the earth; the stoutest hearts are appalled, the haughty and the stubborn are bent, and broken under his maledictory sentence.

He cried aloud and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit. The sentence and the execution are almost simultaneous. The Almighty seldom delays, for any considerable length of time, the stroke of retribution, more especially when the culprit has had sufficient time and opportunity for repentance. In this instance, the sentence scarcely issues from the mouth of God, ere the victim feels the blow, and is seen writhing in the agonizing throes of a sudden and unexpected judgment.

Nebuchadnezzar, having attained the summit of his proudest hopes, and taken his standing on an eminence conspicuous above the surrounding nations, approached the fatal limit. Like a field ripe for the sickle, his arrogance and pride had eminently prepared him for sudden destruction. He had impiously attributed his success and prosperity, the famous monuments he had erected to perpetuate his name and the memory of his

warlike achievements, and the acquisition of his untold treasures, wholly to his own wisdom and power, independent of any higher aid or divine interference. How egregiously he insults the heavens in the proud soliloquy which he uttered while walking in his palace. Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of my kingdom, and by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty ! But hark !—a voice from God's throne peals in his ears, hew down the tree.

He is hurled from his dazzling height—stripped of his royal robes—banished from the society of men, and doomed to herd with the beasts that perish, eat the grass of the field, and tent under the dews of heaven. One blast of God's displeasure hath wrought this horrible ruin !—So vain, so transitory are all the treasures of worldly accumulation, and the pomp and circumstance of princely aggrandizement.

This subject is full of instruction. It inculcates several important and useful lessons.

There are no stations in life, however elevated and enviable, beyond the influence of storm and tempest. There is nothing stable, certain, or of long continuance here. The mountain of our prosperity is doomed to be shaken. Though we should hope for a perpetuation of earthly felicities with the most intense desire ; and wisely, and diligently, provide against the ills of life, yet would the tide of joy be checked in its course, and our vain expectations be disappointed. Indeed, the elevated and seemingly secure may be considered in the greatest danger. The lightning always strikes

the objects it first encounters ; it spends its force upon the proud and the aspiring, and but seldom harms the unassuming and the lowly. He who grasps the world with the strongest arm, and clings to its excitements and pleasures with the greatest ardor, should never feel secure. But few, comparatively, who have attained the summit of their wishes, retain their standing beyond a given point, more especially if they have attempted, like Nebuchadnezzar, to assume a responsibility independent of that Great Being who presides over their destiny, and always punishes severely the least encroachment upon his authority and power.

Let us, then, be guarded, lest prosperity prove our ruin. The hour of calm should be the hour of preparation, of activity and wakefulness. Experience and revelation unite in testifying to this truth. We are daily called to be on the alert, to watch and pray, for at such an hour as we think not, we may be stricken down by the commissioned bolt, and ruined irrecoverably.

A watcher—a holy one is at the helm. He moves unperceived in the splendors of mid-day ;—the most impalpable veils are pierced by his all-pervading presence ; the bright places of the earth are full of him, and the mirrored heavens reflect his glory ; regions deserted and unlovely are animated by his voice, and the deepest caverns of the earth echo forth his praise. His hand is on the everlasting hills, and his breath is in all living things. The affairs of providence are under his control. His noiseless step accompanies us through every avenue of life, and never tires. He is

about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways. Our most secret thoughts he scans ; every word we speak is noted down in the book of his remembrance. He watches our motives, marks our actions, and pities our infirmities. He is ever with us, and ever ready and able to detect and punish us.

“ How careful then ought we to live
With what religious fear ! ”

This holy one has the prerogative of weighing us in the balances of the sanctuary, of counting our sands, and severing the brittle thread of life. His decree cannot be repealed. When he hath said the word, the condemned and sentenced must yield.

Let us contemplate the destruction of him over whom the watcher and holy one have pronounced the sentence of condemnation.

The axe is laid to the root of the tree, and those fibres that so tenderly interlace each other, and beautifully depict the fond endearments of life, and the close fellowship they have with our best feelings, and fondest hopes, are torn asunder by its cruel strokes and left exposed, and bare, and lifeless, to the rude gaze of every beholder. His branches are cut off—those luxuriant boughs which constituted his chief strength and beauty—he is stripped of his leaves, his ornaments and pride. They fall yellow and sear to mingle with the clods of the valley—his scattered fruit are trampled upon like the mildewed produce of a blasted vineyard.

Behold Napoleon, who once rode buoyant and fearless, on the wave of glory—whose gigantic schemes

filled continental Europe with astonishment and dismay, and at the touch of whose political wand nations crumbled into ruins, and thrones were shaken to their foundations. Where now is this great man ! Where abideth this terror of kings, and of nations ? Behold ! his ashes sleep at the threshold of a cottage, upon a rock, which is but a speck in the mighty deep.

There is a warning voice out among men ; it is heard amid the roar of mirth, and in the bustle and hum of business, it falls with an appalling distinctness upon the soul. In the still hour of night and of solitude, it utters sounds of terror and alarm ; it is never silent ; it slumbers not ; it is echoed from the house of mourning and from the vaults of the dead—from the pulpit, and from the records of the past. Time in his rapid flight gives assent to its solemn, weighty appeals, and the secret recesses of every heart, reverberate the serious calls it so repeatedly gives. Thus a good God calls to his aid auxiliaries from every quarter, and sends them forth to press upon the subjects of his moral government the counsels of heaven, that they may escape the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent.

Finally—we may be one day safely moored in the harbor of life, with our streamers gaily kissing the breezes of prosperity—and, the next, torn from our moorings, and driven out on the mountain surges of a dark and frightful sea. One hour, in the bosom of peace and security,—and the next, torn from friends, from home, and happiness, to roam unsheltered on the pathless deeps of an unexplored ocean. Now—slum-

bering on the lap of ease, and now—awake to the terrors of a guilty conscience, covered with shame, and shuddering with horror over a gulf that has swallowed up our hopes, and yawns to receive us, while the watcher and the holy one are ready to pronounce the fatal words—arise, let us go hence. Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.

O ye dry bones, hear ye the word of the Lord.—EZEKIEL, xxxvii. 4.

THESE words, in their historical relation, have a primary reference to the restoration of the Jews ; but spiritually considered, they are intended for our instruction in godliness, to make us wise unto salvation.

THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF A TRUE PROPHET.

The hand of the Lord was upon him. *The hand of the Lord* implies power. The Lord commissions and empowers men whom he chooses to declare salvation to a lost world. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon them, and they are anointed to preach the Gospel. Yea, even necessity is laid upon them, and a wo denounced against them, if they preach not the Gospel. It is asked, How can they preach unless they be sent ? The Almighty answers the question, and assumes the prerogative of sending ministers into his vineyard wholly to himself. I will send, says he, by whom I will send. Hence the church of England, in her ordi-

nation service, very properly requires candidates for the ministry to declare themselves inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel. The first feature, then, by which we can distinguish a true prophet, is in the authority by which he officiates.

And these signs shall follow. The effect will be equal to the cause. If God sends the prophet, and authorises him to preach, the spirit of the prophecy and the divine illumination from above will attend his word. There will be a voice within a voice. The signs of his apostleship will accompany him—the sound of his Master’s footsteps will be heard behind him.—For God sends no minister a warfare at his own charge. He promises to be with them to the end, that his word which they speak shall not return void, but accomplish the great purpose for which it was intended.

This divine authority, accompanying the word to the hearts and consciences of men, is the touchstone ; for we fail in preaching without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit which makes alive, the letter only kills.

“The still small voice is wanted ; He must speak,
Whose word at once leaps forth to its effect,
Who calls for things that are not, and they come.”

Human learning, without divine aid, is vain, is idle.—Our discourses may be correct and beautiful, richly embellished with the flowers of literature ; regular in all their parts, and combining every thing grand and sublime in their composition, but without the accompanying influences of the good Spirit, they will be like

sounding brass or the tinkling of a cymbal. The Gospel which cannot be felt and realised, and has no power in it, is not the Gospel which was taught by our Lord and his disciples, nor the Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light.—The next feature of the true prophet is the energy and spirit by which he is animated.

He has a discovery of the state of mankind by nature. And the prophet was set down in the midst of the valley, and he was caused to pass by them and round about them, and behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry.

He has a lively representation of the wretched, ruined, and undone state of his fellow men. He sees the millions who are lying composed and apparently contented in the open valley of an unconverted state. He sees the sword of God drawn upon them. He reads the hand writing which condemns them. He hears the fiery law denouncing its vengeance and uttering its anathemas. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, he persuades men. With earnestness, accompanied by tears and prayers, he implores poor impenitent sinners to be reconciled to God, lest, by persisting in their rebellion, they should be suddenly consumed and destroyed without remedy. Deeply imbued with a sense of man's fallen and undone condition, and seeing no way of recovery, save by an entire, full, and instant submission to the requirements of the Gospel, he shakes them with the thunders of the world to come, and ringing the dreadful peal which announces perdition to the finally incorrigible, never gives up his suit till they have

grounded their weapons of warfare, and paid their vows at the feet of the Crucified. Love for immortal souls is another most important feature by which a true prophet of the Lord is distinguished.

He is obedient to the heavenly command. So I prophesied as I was commanded. Then I said I will speak no more in his name, but his word was a fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. He may tremble in view of his great responsibility, and exclaim with Jeremiah, Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am but a child—or with the great apostle, Who is sufficient for these things? But encouraged by the voice of Him who dwelt in the bush, saying, Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee—fear not, be strong, quit you like men; for I am with thee always, and I will be a mouth and a wisdom to thee;—he puts the trumpet to his lips, and sounds an alarm on the heights of Zion. Like Moses, he stands up in the gate of the camp of Israel, and cries aloud, Who is on the Lord's side?—and fearlessly delivers his message, regardless of the tide of popular opinion, the number, strength, or prowess of his enemies.

A true prophet is sent of God, and qualified with all necessary gifts and graces to render him an able and successful minister of the covenant of mercy.

THE CHARACTERS TO WHOM HE IS SENT TO PROPHECY.

They are here represented under the figure of dry bones.—Son of man, these dry bones are the whole house of Israel.

They were dead. It is written, man is dead in trespasses and sins. To be carnally minded is death. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Not merely temporal but spiritual death, being a separation from God by reason of sin. For sin, entering into every power of the soul, has contaminated the whole man, binding him up in ignorance, unbelief, and folly, and exercising a most unnatural dominion over all his energies and faculties. But as in every particle of matter there is a principle of fire, so in dead sinners there is a principle of life, a dim perception of divine light, an emanation from that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. This is the grace of God which hath appeared unto all men.

They were very dry. This is highly expressive of the sinner's lamentable condition. Having no spiritual life, that is, none in action, no spiritual enjoyment. Not being grafted in Christ, the true and living Vine, they are without proper nourishment; and must, in time, if not resuscitated, become dead branches, parched, and the living principle wholly extinct, to be cast out into the valley of despair and gathered up and thrown into that fire prepared for the devil and his angels.—And inasmuch as branches thus severed will gradually die of themselves and become useless, or fit only for the fire, so will poor sinners, if they neglect the day of grace, and trifle with the merciful offers of salvation.

They were in the open valley. Out of their proper

places, not answering the great ends for which they were created, being originally formed for the noblest purposes, even for the love and enjoyment of the great God. How can men be said to answer these ends, if they take every method they can devise to banish the important concerns of a future state from their minds, serving sin and following the devices and desires of their own evil hearts, and that continually ; permitting the god of this world to usurp that place in their affections which is the rightful throne of the sovereign of the universe. Such a course of conduct is irrational. It throws man out of his proper orbit, mars his relations to God, to other beings, and himself, lessens the force of moral obligation, counteracts the gracious designs of his Creator, rendering him a burden and an embarrassment in the scale of moral and intellectual existence.

They had no sinews, nor flesh, nor covering upon them. Not even the form of godliness, nor the slightest mark or token by which the prophet could distinguish them as human. What a fit resemblance do they bear to outrageous, incorrigible offenders, who have thrown off all religious restraint, and make it their study to ridicule the operations of the divine Spirit. How many beings live in a manner worse than brutes ! What a monster is the man who is forgetful of his God ! A wonder amongst the beasts that perish !—above them with respect to intelligence and rationality ; but far below them in answering the purposes of his high and noble origin. Who would trifle on a scaffold, or frolic in the midst of devouring flames ? None but fools or madmen !

“ ’Tis a fearful spectacle to see
 So many maniacs dancing in their chains ;
 They gaze upon the links that hold them fast
 With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,
 Then shake them in despair, and dance again.”

They were in their graves, surrounded with corruption, dust, and worms, full of all manner of diseases, yet fancying themselves in perfect health. In a word, poor sinners dwell in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death.

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF HIS PROPHECY.

The word of the Lord, not the word of man. The Lord said to Jonah, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching I bid thee. And the prophet Micah said to the king of Israel’s messengers, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak. My preaching, says Paul, was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and with power ; for Christ sent me to preach the Gospel, not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. And again, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

This word we preach, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. This was the preaching of the apostolic age. It was the preaching of the primitive fathers of the church ; it is Bible preaching. Christ crucified is our theme. It is the motto upon our banner. It is the beginning, the continuance, and the end of all our ministrations. Indeed, Christ crucified is the only true foundation of all Gospel preaching.

This word proclaims life from the dead. Has man a dead soul? Christ is the resurrection and the life.—The voice divine is, awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee life.

This word is also made spirit and life, for Christ is a quickening spirit. It comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Is not my word like a fire and a hammer, saith the Lord. It breaks the impenitent heart, it enkindles holy ardor in the soul. It is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This word, like the sword of the cherubim, moves every way to guard the tree of life. It is a flaming sword to the ungodly, and to the christian soldier it is both a guard and a light. Like Israel's pillar of fire, it guides him through the enemy's country in safety to the promised Canaan.

We preach Christ. Here we fix our determined stand. Here we lay the corner stone of our building, and while skeptics are blundering in the dark, and infidels using their blasphemous wits to asperse the doctrines of the Gospel, and to tarnish the bright lustre of its glorious founder, we will urge our way through their opposing ranks, and preach the living word of the living God, which has power on earth to raise the dead to life.

Some may be ready to inquire, How can these things be? Can these dry bones live? We answer: This earth was once without form and void, and darkness

was upon the face of the great deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters ; and God said, let there be light, and there was light ; and God created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is therein.

We ask in return, how were these wonders performed? Can we by searching find out God? He who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ; who doeth great things past finding out ; yea, and wonders without number ! Can we know how he causes a blade of grass to spring from the earth, how the seasons change, and suns, and moons, and stars remain fixed, or revolve through yonder boundless space? Answer who can.

“ Enwrap creation, travel up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height
And tell us whence the stars, why some are fix'd,
And planetary some ; what gave them first
Rotation, from what fountain flowed their light.”

Finally, we preach that same Jesus who called forth Lazarus from his grave ; in the streets of Nain wrested the prey from the mighty ; at whose last groan the earth shook to her centre, the sun hid his face, the stars refused to shine, the rocks brake in pieces, the graves gave up their dead, and by virtue of whose name all manner of signs and wonders were wrought by the apostles and others in the early ages of christianity.

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THE JUDGMENT DAY.

OUR attention is not called to matters of a speculative nature, nor are our feelings arrested to pay the tribute of a tear or a sigh to the memory of the virtuous dead. It is not a splendid representation of empty trifles to which we are invited ; nor is our pencil dipped in the visionary colors of the poet. Ours is a loftier theme—a subject of stupendous moment, to which the events of millions of ages bear no proportion, and in which are involved the destinies of all mankind.

Treading on consecrated ground we unloose the sandals from off our feet, and with trembling hands lift the curtain of eternity.

The drama of the Judgment day is our theme.

“ That day of dread decision and despair !
'Tis present to my thoughts—yet where is it ?
Angels can't tell me ; angels cannot guess
The period, from created beings lock'd
In darkness.”

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

As all great and terrible events in the natural world are generally preceded by a stillness prophetic of their near approach, the eve preceding that day for which all other days are made, will be calm and unruffled, and an unusual serenity will pervade creation: the heavenly bodies will shine out unrivalled in beauty, and perform their various revolutions with the same precision as when first formed, and not a speck or a cloud dim the vaulted skies.

The awfully portentous day will open with the most tremendous displays of God's Eternal Majesty. Every thing which can strike terror to the heart of man will be introduced. Already every gem in the diadem of night is quenched in darkness—the king of day is shorn of his resplendent beams, and the pale, silvery light of the moon changed to a crimson, bloody hue.

“ In grandeur terrible all heaven descend,
A swift archangel with his golden wing,
As clouds and blots, that darken and disgrace
The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside :
And thus, all dross remov'd, heaven's own pure day
Full on the confines of our ether flames.”

The trump of God will then be heard, thundering through the vast profound ; and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, monuments are burst asunder—the charnel houses of the dead opened—the foundations of the great deep bared, and the dead, who had slept from time immemorial, bursting their bonds, start up in promiscuous crowds, shaking off the slumber of ages, and awaking to endless joy or hopeless misery.

“ Such shall the noise be, and the wild disorder,
 If things eternal may be like things earthly,
 Such the dire terror when the great Archangel
 Shakes the creation.”

The Judge will then appear ; the man who stood at Pilate's bar, the once afflicted, persecuted, and slain Jesus. But O, how changed ! In majesty terrible, he descends with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God ; ten thousand thunders roll before him ; his precursors gleam far and wide over the heavens ; myriads of dazzling squadrons of bright angelic spirits attend him to his burning throne. Hallelujahs and acclamations of joy strike the lofty dome, and shake universal nature.

No just nor adequate conceptions can be formed of the vastness and splendor of this august tribunal. The thrones of the sceptered Cæsars, the arbiters of worlds, with all the pomp and magnificence of the universe dwindle into insignificance, vanity, and nothingness in comparison. Innumerable companies of angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, hang in rich and glorious clusters around it.

Flashes of fire issue from the Eternal's presence, and flaming cherubs encircle his footstool.

Before this tribunal we must all stand,—all who have ever existed from the beginning of the world, and none shall be able to withstand or elude the summons. Were they to take the wings of the morning and fly to the remotest regions of space and observation, or shroud themselves in the dark abyss of that dreary gulf which separates hell from heaven, they would be sought

out by the ministers of justice and hurried into the presence of the judge of the quick and dead. No shelter will be afforded them in all the immensity of creation, nor among the deep intricacies of unbounded nature. Every hiding place will be explored and made manifest by that great Being with whom there is no darkness nor uncertainty, nothing hidden nor mysterious.

We might as easily number the drops of the ocean, or the sands on its shores, the stars that glitter in the blue of heaven, or the leaves on the trees, as count the persons to be judged. Their number will exceed the utmost stretch of human calculation.

If this earth bears at one time eight hundred millions of souls, what a vast congregation will all the generations make which have succeeded each other for near five thousand years and may continue to people our world till the general judgment.

All the inhabitants of other worlds, if there are any on those brilliant orbs floating in the immeasurable fields of space—they will hear the dreadful trump of God echoing from the portals of the sky, and crowd to meet him in the air.

We must all stand there. The illustrious and the obscure—the soldier and statesman—the blooming youth and venerable sire—small and great—rich and poor. Death is no respecter of persons. He knows no distinctions among men. In a few short years we must pass off the stage of time and be swept into the oblivious wave, until, reanimated by the voice of God,

we take our station before the great white throne, and tremble or rejoice to hear our final sentence.

The day is broke which never more shall close. The great assize is come. The tutelary and destroying angels are returned. They have stopped the wheels of time; they have unlocked the dreary prisons of the dead, and thrown open the gates of hell. The heavenly orders, with the saints who are to judge the world, are placed in shining circles, or on fiery chariots wait in silent, awful expectation. The long expected trial of men and wicked angels is begun.

“I see the Judge enthron’d, the flaming guard,
The volume opened, open’d every heart,
A sunbeam pointing out each secret thought.”

A TREMBLING WORLD IS PLACED AT THE BAR.

And now all that has been done in the body is made manifest, whether it was good or whether it was evil. Every heart is bared, and the principles and emotions of every conscience exposed. The grand inquiry is made. What were the motives which actuated us in our several pursuits—the principles upon which we fixed our hopes, or raised our expectations? Were they of such a pure and evangelical nature as shall now bear the test—as shall now stand the fiery ordeal?

The hypocrite’s hopes vanish into air—his thin disguise falls off, and all his false and borrowed beauty withers. To his horror and confusion, he is unmasked before those upon whom he had imposed by fair speeches and false pretensions to godliness.

The blood-thirsty conqueror, the tyrannical and cruel monarch, the ermined noble, and the proud prelate, levelled now to the condition of the meanest slave, await their trial in dread uncertainty and despair—shuddering at the punishments which await them.

See the promiscuous crowds—heaps on heaps are seen on every side, as far as eye can reach, or disembodied spirits ken—no measure to the lengthened space—no bounds, no limits set. They wait, big with horror, and overwhelmed with despair.

Here stands a group of frightened Jews—their features distorted, and their bitter wailings the prelude to the beginnings and outbreaks of their approaching misery.

There is a motley crew, apparently worked up to the most fearful looking for of wrath and indignation. Those are the men who dipped their pens in the waters of Meribah—who, in their sacrilegious phrenzy, called the blessed Jesus imposter, and whose impious tongues uttered the foulest blasphemies.

Yonder is a multitude no man can number, composed of different grades of character, from all neutrals in religion down to the basest of the human race.

On the right of these a glorious company advances. Numbers join them on every hand of various nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. Here are Europeans and Americans—the children of Africa—the sons and daughters of Asia, and the red tribes of the wilderness. Here are all colors, all degrees, and all orders of men. *Who are these?*—Their appearance bespeaks their origin celestial, and their birth divine. A calm

serenity, a placid resignation, a holy joy sits triumphant on each brow.

These are they who bathed their garments in dust and blood, having warred an honorable warfare, contended valiantly for the faith of the Gospel, and, even in the hour of their greatest extremity, triumphed over the combined powers of earth and hell. Their near alliance to the Prince of the kings of the earth, is now acknowledged in the most public manner in the presence of men, and of angels, and of the God of angels.

Behold that company of weather beaten, worn out veterans, coming forward like a mighty army, distinguished by their heroic bearing and scarred honors. Those are the patriarchs, the worthies of Israel, the holy prophets, the evangelists, the blessed martyrs, the intrepid reformers in various ages of the christian church, the missionaries of the cross to heathen lands, the devoted and zealous ministers of Christ, whose valiant deeds are registered before the throne of God.

And now all mysteries are unravelled. The dispensations of olden times rendered simple and easy. The mysterious scenery of Jewish and Gospel days displayed and explained before the wondering eyes of all God's intelligences—and, in all the announcements of the divine character, in the various and hidden directions given to the complicated movements of the whole, are seen, mingled together like the colors of the rainbow in beautiful unison, the stern features of his justice, the mild traces of his love and mercy, and the brightest beamings of his majesty and glory. The obscurity is removed from the history of the world, and

the most perfect arrangement, symmetry and beauty are discoverable in all the ways, works, and designs of providence.

The wicked stand confounded ; the apologising and the sophist are silenced, and the infidel abashed and humbled. They hear and see and know now, who the Almighty whom they rejected, despised and confronted, is ; and begin to feel the full force of his vengeful arm.

The trial closes, the great decision is made, the separation line drawn, and the sentence pronounced on the evil and the good.

On the good. And then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Had we an angel's pencil, we might pourtray the glory and the felicity, which will be the portion of the saints of God in the realms of uncreated light. But the brightest seraph before his throne, would be inadequate to the task. Shall we, then, poor mortals, whose powers are circumscribed, confined to earth, and clogged with the incumbrances of flesh, presumptuously aspire to paint the bliss, the joy, the full fruition of a state so glorious—a happiness so complete, so consummate ?

On the evil. Here we are equally at a loss, nor are we able, to describe the horrors, the sorrows of the despairing ones. Were it possible for us to disclose the secrets of their prison-house, the discovery would conjure up feelings the most indescribable, the

most terrific and heart appalling ; none would be uninterested. The trifler would be awed into solemnity ; the careless and the unconcerned awakened and aroused. How fearfully should we look around us and ask the dreadful question, can we dwell in everlasting flames, or lie down in devouring fire ? What heart searchings would commence, what tears of true repentance deluge the footstool of mercy ! What inward groanings—what bitter outcries—what fearful anticipations—what strong resolutions—what solemn promises of future amendment—what fervent prayers—what overwhelming petitions ! Heaven would be assailed with holy violence ; every heart would be pierced through and through with the most agonizing reflections, and heave sighs so piteous, and so mournful, that they would finally issue in general lamentations of sorrow and grief.

“ Heaven gives the needful but neglected call ;
 What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts
 To wake the soul to sense of future scenes.”

The execution of the sentence pronounced upon our world. For the heaven, and the earth, which are now, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

———“ At that destin’d hour,
 By the loud trumpet summon’d to the charge,
 See all the formidable sons of fire,
 Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play
 Their various engines, all at once disgorge
 Their blazing magazines, and take by storm
 This poor, terrestrial citadel of man.”

Those immense magazines of liquid fire, that are confined in the centre of the earth, will then burst

forth with terrible explosions. Ætna and Vesuvius will open their huge jaws, and emit burning lava and fragments of rocks heated for destruction. Thick clouds of vapour and smoke will roll down the hills and cover the distant plains. The elemental war commences. Fire and water, air and earth commingle together. Flashes of lightning in vivid streaks, gleam throughout creation. Thunders break in every direction, and rattling peals succeed each other, till worlds from distant worlds re-echo dreadfully the direful clangor of the last agonies of dissolving nature. The towering mountains totter on their base; and earth, reeling from her centre, plunges in the fiery void. The curling volumes of liquid flame rise from the ruins of a burning world, and envelope all the realms of created nature.

“ The roaring winds

Now blow a hurricane around our world—
 The dashing billows haughtily o’erleap
 Their ancient barriers, deluging the earth !
 Fires from beneath, and meteors from above
 Portentous, unexpected, unexplained,
 Kindle beacons in the skies, and the old
 And crazy earth cracks even to her centre.
 The pillars of our earth now tottering fall,
 And nature with a dim and sickly eye
 Awaits the close of all.”

And do we stand on the broken fragment of time unconcerned? Are we suspended in the vast immensity of space—hanging over the depths of an unfathomable ocean, whose rude billows ever roll and never find a resting place—trembling on the verge of an eternity in which we may be lost, and exposed to the

peltings of the storms of incensed justice—and yet do we sleep—we for whom all earth and heaven are in alarm—the sole cause of this surrounding wreck, this cruel storm, this elemental war?

The creation of a new heaven and a new earth.
And I saw, says the apocalyptic prophet, a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were past away.—And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.—And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The everlasting doors give way, and the splendid city of the living God appears glittering with gold, and shining with precious stones.

The blood washed company advances with crowns of gold upon their heads, and palms of victory in their hands, robed in the glorious garments of righteousness, attended by harpers harping on their harps, and angels hymning with celestial melody.

The triumphal chariot of the all-conquering Emmanuel, attended by the hosts of heaven, and the myriads of the redeemed, gains the suburbs of paradise ;—it enters through the gates of the city ;—the streets of the New Jerusalem are thronged.—The celestial light of eternity falls in lovely splendor on the golden streets ; no sun is needed in those blessed realms, for the glory of God and of the Lamb, like a

mantle, shall forever cover the holy hill of Zion. Immortality throws an enchanting beauty over the countless millions of earth's redeemed ones, and the voice of their sorrow breaks out no more.

The emerald gates close. He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly ; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

A SERMON

DELIVERED SEPT. 24, 1823, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE METHODIST
CHAPEL, NANTUCKET.

PSALM xxvi. 8.

Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where
thine honor dwelleth.

THE patriarchs, the prophets, and other holy men, from the earliest ages of the world, have had the highest veneration for those places where the name of JEHOVAH was recorded, or where he made special exhibitions of his power and goodness.

Although their example, in this respect, is worthy of our imitation, yet there is great danger arising from an undue attachment to particular places, without an abiding remembrance that it is not the house we are to worship, but that God who hallows the house ; nor its beauty that we are to admire, but the “beauty of the Lord.” How solitary seemed the sepulchre and

the garden to Mary, when she perceived not her Lord! What is this terrestrial paradise without his presence—what would heaven be without his smiles? Answer, ye veterans of the cross—answer ye blood-washed company—ye bright angelic spirits! It is the Master we are to seek in the assembly of his saints—the God of all the earth. This was the object of the Psalmist, whose soul, attuned to holy meditation, and in the chastened transports of exalted thought, sings, “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.—For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” “I have loved” he continues, “the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.” Deeply impressed with these sentiments, and awed into the most profound reverence, *we* bow before a present God, humbly imploring his divine aid to assist us in dedicating a temple to his service. We shall inquire,

I. What is implied in loving the habitation of the Lord’s house?

II. Why do holy men love his habitation?—and then proceed to the main object of our present meeting.

I. What is implied in loving the habitation of the Lord’s house? To love the habitation of the Lord, implies a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God

manifest in the flesh—Emmanuel, God with us—the Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

It implies a knowledge of him, as the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature : for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him : and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And without him was not any thing made that was made. Behold his footsteps in the sea ; hear his thunderings borne upon the viewless winds, and read the traces of his hand on yonder blue expanse !

“ The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise, the powerful God ;
And his rich glories from afar,
Sparkle in every rolling star.”

It implies a knowledge of him as our prophet, priest and king, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.

“ Darkness his curtain, and his bed the dust.
When stars and sun were dust beneath his throne,
He seized our dreadful right ; the load sustained,
And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world ;
A thousand worlds so bought, were bought too dear.”

Here we pause, we wonder, we admire. Our souls are swallowed up in contemplating the blaze of that stupendous love of Christ, which the cruel hatred of an ungrateful world could not extinguish ; that astonishing meekness which no malicious treatment could overwhelm ; that wonderful patience which bore the bitterest taunts, and the most excruciating tortures without a murmur ; and above all—that unprecedented spirit of forgiveness which invites poor sinners to take shelter in that bosom they had covered with scars, and wraps them up in the folds of its love and mercy!

“ Bound every heart, and every bosom burn ;
 Praise flow forever—if astonishment
 Will give thee leave—my praise forever flow.
 Eternity too short to speak thy praise,
 Or fathom thy profound of love to man.”

Our love of the Lord's house is implied by our diligent attendance, while there, on his ordinances.—This attendance must be given, not as a matter of mere formality in compliance with the prevailing custom. We may be punctual in our observance of the external duties of the house of God, and yet have neither part nor lot in the matter. They are not all Israel, who are of Israel. Indeed an experimental knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and a devotional frame of mind, are inseparably connected with the true worship of God. Without this necessary qualification, we shall not be capable of perceiving the perfections of his character, as they are reflected through the rich variety of ways by which he communicates his grace to the soul.

You must not only show yourselves zealous in the love of the Lord's house, by being present on all proper occasions ; but you must pray fervently to the God of all grace, that the word here dispensed may be attended by the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power ; that here sinners may be awakened, souls converted, and christians built up in their most holy faith. With all this, you must enter the field yourselves, and aid your ministers, not by your prayers alone, but by the most arduous and unremitting efforts, to press upon your fellow men the importance of those truths which are announced and enforced from the pulpit. Indeed such is their importance, so tremendous their consequences, involving the destinies of all around you, that they deserve your most earnest attention.— Soon, very soon, it may be lamented that our opportunities for doing good are lost in the surge of that oblivious wave which overwhelms all present things. But,

II. Why do holy men love the habitation of the Lord's house ? Because it is “the place where his honor dwelleth.” There, he is eminently present as the father of his family. There, are the emanations of his countenance, and the rich droppings of the heavenly manna. He, who has promised to supply all the wants of his people, is there. He giveth liberally and upbraideth not. He is there, who is perfectly acquainted with all their trials, sorrows and afflictions. Are they wrecked, and plundered of every joy?—are they

friendless, wretched and forlorn? Even for them there is a season of rest, a reciprocation of feeling in the dear Redeemer. For he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. How well qualified, then, is such a High Priest, touched as he is with the feeling of our infirmities, to pour the oil of consolation into the wounded spirit, and to bind up the broken heart!

In the christian's temple, there is a holy of holies, a sacred retreat, a Bethel where the disencumbered, disenthralled soul finds access to the sprinkled throne of mercy, and communes with a present God. Here the veil of the invisible world is gently lifted up, and the devout christian is discovered by angels in audience with the Deity: for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.

Holy men love the habitations of the Lord, because in his courts their ears were first saluted with the glad tidings of peace and salvation. There, the day-spring from on high visited their benighted souls. There, God met them, took their feet from the horrible pit, placed them on the rock of ages, and put a new song in their mouths, even praise to God. There too, they have fed in green pastures, and have drank copiously of the pure streams of the river of life, which make glad the city of our God.

Christians love the habitation of the Lord's house, because there they ripen for heaven. It is the gate through which they pass to the heavenly city. Here the weary pilgrim is pointed to the summit of those everlasting hills, where the followers of the Lamb are forever at rest. Here a reverential awe, with all the

silent heaven of love, pervades, tranquillizes, and elevates his soul. Here the sublimated mind, rising from earth, soars by faith far beyond the limits of our world, enters the third heaven, and basks in the beams of uncreated bliss. Here the saints of God shall recover from the pollutions of their nature, and expatiate on the beauty and the sublimity of divine knowledge.—Here their souls shall be imbued with an unction from on high, and glow with the pure flame of holy love. Here they shall anticipate the joys of the heavenly world. And when they shall have left this earthly tabernacle, and are translated to the region of light and love—that building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, they shall then claim kindred with the spirits of just men made perfect, mingle with the redeemed of the Lord, and surround his throne with unceasing praise.

On this interesting occasion, I am led to admire the goodness of God, in preserving his true worship through every age of the world. Sacrifices were offered by the children of men, almost from the creation to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Heaven's court was held on the summit of Sinai. While encircled with the insignia of the great God, the Jewish legislator received the commandments written on tables of stone, as also the law, and a minute description of the tabernacle which he was commanded to erect for JEHOVAH to dwell in.

At the dedication of the temple by Solomon, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests themselves could not enter. Such was the

overwhelming influence of the King of kings and Lord of lords, that the children of Israel bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good ; for his mercy endureth forever.

Although the second temple was inferior to that built by Solomon, in splendor and magnificence ; yet it was rendered more glorious by the appearance of the desire of all nations within its walls.

We do not read of any particular houses set apart for public worship among the primitive christians.—It is probable there were none. The circumstances of danger with which they were surrounded, necessarily obliged them to consult their own safety by resorting to such places as were best calculated to secure them from the evil designs of their enemies. In process of time, however, a new order of things arose. The churches of Christ became rich, and increased in goods, having need of nothing. This state of outward prosperity contributed in no small degree, to debase the character and pervert the principles of christianity. Its true spirit evaporated. Its priests sunk into a state of apathy, pride, and worldly-mindedness. Idolatry, superstition, and bigotry mingled unhallowed rites with the purity and simplicity of apostolic worship ; and arrayed themselves in all the pomp and glitter of external forms and ceremonies.

While the christian church was thus enwrapt in the mists of visionary fanaticism, and almost wholly obscured in the darkest gloom, a light from heaven broke upon the astonished world. It was the light of truth !

It penetrated the cloisters of the venerable reformers of the fifteenth century, warmed their hearts, irradiated their minds, and led them in safety through the perils of a dreadful tempest under the thunders of the Vatican.

They came forth, clothed in all the majesty of pure and undefiled religion, and with holy boldness denounced the sins, and exposed the corruptions of the church. Theirs was no strange fire ; no enthusiasm caught from the spirit of the times. It was a flame from God's altar ; communicated to their souls while surrounded by the presence of him who dwelt in the bush.

Nothing could withstand these valiant defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints. Ignorance and error fled before them. The proud champions of religious intolerance were discomfited ; the battle was turned back to the gate, and the banners of oppression no longer waved over half the European world. It is true, the most desperate efforts were made, and the most cruel means resorted to, in order to stop the influence of the spirit and example of the reformers. But the torture and the faggot, the dungeon and the inquisition, all proved ineffectual. The blood of the martyrs refreshed the garden of the Lord. Another and another host of heroes rose as from their ashes. They joined the armies of the cross ; the spirit of the holy prophets fell upon them. They burst the fetters of superstition—they shook the temples of Dagon—they raised the song of triumph—they shouted victory !

Our American Israel has caught the hallowed sound, and, from her thousand thousand cloud-capt hills, echoed back the holy anthem. Nor has the theme died upon our lips. We can still sweep the harp of Zion.—The magnificent concert still reverberates along our shores. It strikes the vault of heaven, and, on the wings of every wind, wafts new gospel tidings to the land of our fathers.

“ Salvation ! let the echo fly
 The spacious earth around ;
 While all the armies of the sky
 Conspire to raise the sound.”

Two centuries only have transmitted their records to the courts of heaven since this land was tenanted by cruel hordes of savages. No smiling hamlet then cheered the eye. No holy sanctuary invited the weary to its sheltering bosom :

“ The sound of the church-going bell,
 Those valleys and hills never heard ;
 Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
 Nor smiled when a sabbath appeared.”

But lo ! another scene opens on our view. This vast region, late a howling wilderness, now smiling in all the beauty of Eden, is spreading forth on every side her fertile fields, and healthful skies, to support and cherish the rose of Sharon planted in her bosom. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it, thou didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land ; the

hills were covered with its shadow, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar.

This is a country favored of the Lord. Here he has set up his standard, proclaimed his name, and is establishing his everlasting kingdom. In these United States, no despotic laws bind the conscience ; no galling chains fetter the soul. A broad, generous and liberal system of government opens a wide and effectual door for the preaching of the Gospel. It rears its fostering rampart around religions of every name ; and affords shelter, and extends its protection equally to all, without distinction and without partiality. Truly then our lines have fallen in pleasant places.

Is not this a land of Bibles ? are they not scattered over this vast continent ? Though silent and unostentatious in their progress, they are extending their influence in every direction, enlightening the mind of man, and preparing him for the reception of an indwelling God.

Behold ! the Angel of the Church, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all the dwellers upon earth, has visited our distant settlements, even now he is lighting on the isles of the sea, evangelizing the heathen world, arresting the car of Juggernaut in its cursed, immolating progress, and pushing the victories of the cross to earth's remotest bounds.

We have Bible and Sunday school institutions ; marine, mite, and tract societies ; associations for the relief of the widow, and the orphan ; with many others, all directing their energies to promote one grand object ; like the rays of light emanating from one

source, and pouring a flood of divine glory on the inhabitants of our world.

Here then, in this goodly land, we have found out a place for JEHOVAH to dwell in. This altar we consecrate—this edifice we hallow. We dedicate this house to “the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God.” We devote it to that Being whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, who yet deigns to be present where two or three are assembled in his name. God is here. He who dwelt between the cherubim, the Being of beings, the God of love is beholding us.

Then let us bow with reverence, and may ministering angels attend, while we raise this stone of our Ebenezer, and pouring forth the incense of grateful joy, call this God’s House.

And now, what wait we for? Is the Lord’s arm shortened, that he cannot save? Is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear? No, verily. He is unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever :—the same being who dried up the waters of the great deep, and made a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over; the same who thundered from Sinai, wept in the garden of agony, hung on the cross, entered the prisons of the grave, burst the bars of death, and, loaded with the spoils of the cruel monster, rose triumphant to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Awake, then, awake; put on strength, O Arm of the Lord! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old!

What a moment is this, fraught with the most awfully interesting consequences to all present ! Both saint and sinner are deeply involved in the issue of the negotiations here commenced on this auspicious day.

My hearers ! we preach in the view of the eternal world, in the view of devils, in the presence of men, of angels, and of the God of angels. Our subject is not confined to the fate of nations, or the rise and fall of empires. It does not regard merely this life's short span. It crosses death's narrow isthmus, extends to the last judgment, and terminates only at the dissolution of worlds.

And will you, who are without God and without hope in the world, pass these things by as the trifles of an hour ? You, who with a swift, though insensible motion, are gliding down the current of time, into the boundless ocean of eternity ? Art thou still asleep in thy fragile bark, dreaming of perpetual sunshine amidst the veering winds that war around thee ! Be warned of your danger, lest the terrors of the second death overtake you, and the Eternal God swear in his wrath thou shalt not enter into his rest.

O sinner ! hast thou turned away from the house of God ? hast thou despised the place where his honor dwelleth ? or hast thou visited his house in vain ? hast thou neglected thine immortal soul ?—Why lingerest thou on forbidden ground ? Why tarriest thou in all the plain ? The Angel of the covenant commands thee to flee—yea, to flee for thy life—to flee to the mountain ! He points thee to Calvary ! Away then,

speedily, to the friend of sinners, while it is called to-day ; ere the night cometh, the night of death, when the sun of thy probation shall have set to rise no more forever.

Sinners ! the hour is coming when the fearful midnight cry, ye dead arise, and come to judgment !—shall pierce the tombs of your fathers ;—when a drowsy world shall start from their guilty slumbers ;—when the chambers of the sky shall be thrown open ;—the everlasting doors give way, and the descending Jesus appear in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to judge the quick and dead.

“ —————From his great abode,
Full on a whirlwind rides the dreadful God :
The tempest’s rattling winds, the fiery car,
Ten thousand hosts his ministers of war ;
The flaming Cherubim attend his flight,
And heaven’s foundations groan beneath the weight.”

There is but one door of hope for thy escape ; but one ark of safety for thy sinking soul. That door we throw open, this day :—into that ark we earnestly invite thee. Here then you may touch the golden sceptre. This may be your birth place, the vestibule through which you may pass to the bosom of rejected love and mercy :—listening angels here wait to catch the first accents of your repentant prayer, and from these portals bear the joyful tidings to the courts above. And why not now return ?—Even now the word of the Lord may fall like cloven tongues upon this assembly ;—even now the soft breezes of God’s mercy may waft the odour of a Saviour’s love to

your hearts, and breathe life into these slain. Your heavenly Joseph waits to make himself known to you. God hath sent him to preserve you. He desires to call you brethren. May this temple be indeed dedicated by the return of some poor starving prodigal this day to his father's house !

My beloved brethren let us continue to love the habitation of the Lord's house—the place where his honor dwelleth. Take heed to your ways lest at any time you make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience. Hold fast the form of sound words ; let no man deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Let not the sophistry of that proud reasoning which is employed and controlled by the impenitent, selfish heart, lead you astray. Watch, lest you founder on the quicksands of metaphysical divinity, or are dashed against the rocks of modern skepticism. Be cautious how you hear, how you speak, how you receive. Prove all things ; but do this by the word of God, studied with prayer for divine teaching. This is the way to acquire not prevalent opinions on religious subjects ; but a practical knowledge of the truth. Pursue this method with a humble heart and an obedient life, and you will ever stand on firm and safe ground ; for if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Here then fix your determined stand, and hold fast that which is good, rejecting all else. Cleave to the purity, the simplicity, the vitality of the Gospel. Aim at primitive christi-

anity, that which can be known, and felt, and realized ; that which was taught by Christ and his apostles ;— by Wesley, and Whitefield, and Tennant, and Coke, with many other worthies, who have fought a good fight, kept the faith, finished their course, and are now at rest from all their toils.

Be not satisfied with a good profession merely.— Give to all with whom you associate a lucid and beautiful exhibition of the christian character, by a well ordered life and conversation. Be zealous for the honor of the cause which you have espoused. Be not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God ; but always bear about with you the words of our Lord : whosoever therefore is ashamed of me and of my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Let not party zeal limit the full exercise of all those social sympathies so highly recommended by the Gospel. Cautiously avoid imbibing the narrow feelings of pharisaical professors. These check the current of that benevolence which is the essence of our holy religion, and which throws a halo of divine glory around its doctrines and precepts—a religion which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Remember you are not partizans, but *christians*.— You are not of Paul, nor of Apollos, nor of Cephas—but, of Christ. He hath bought you with his own most precious blood. You have enlisted under his banner.

Then let *love to God and good will to man* be your motto. May this be inscribed on all your hearts ; for upon these two precepts hang all the law and the prophets.

Finally, my brethren, whenever you approach this house, let it be that these holy precepts may be re-impressed more deeply on your hearts, and exhibited more distinctly in your lives. Always consider that you are about to appear before the self-existent, the omnipresent **JEHOVAH**. Suffer no vain desires, no unhallowed thoughts, no unsanctified feelings to intrude upon your devotions. Command every avenue to your souls, and when you find yourselves within the walls of this **Zion**, loose the sandals from off your feet, and know that you tread on 'holy ground. Here the Lord will speak peace to his people, and call poor sinners to repentance. Here he will meet you.—Here he will clothe his priests with salvation, and here his saints shall shout aloud for joy.

Let us, therefore, be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And when the Sun of righteousness shall have dispelled the thick mists that encompass this habitation of mortals, and the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ;—when nature, decrepid with age, languishes for her burial, and the dark places of our earth tremble ;—when the dreadful trump of God shall have announced the end of time, and the consummation of all things, and heaven and earth shall pass away with a great noise ;—then you shall mount with him through the fiery void, and in the

full assembly of the saints, attended by an innumerable company of angels, enter into the splendid temple of the living God, shine as the brightness of the firmament in the kingdom of your Father, and join the myriads of the redeemed in ascribing might, and majesty, and dominion, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever. AMEN.

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT DOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, FAST DAY, APRIL 13, 1826.

ISAIAH, v. 4, 5.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.

THE prophet Isaiah struck the solemn harp of prophecy with a master's hand. His mind was of such a sublime and tuneful mould, that had he lived in Greece, he would have been its Homer; or, in a later age, the Milton of classic England. The Spirit of the Highest had indeed baptized him with the waters that flow "fast by the throne of God," and given him power to lift the misty coverings from futurity—to hold communion with events and circumstances that were to be developed to mankind in some dark periods of the coming eternity; yet native genius

had set the impress of immortality upon the original structure of his mind, and placed in his hands the elements of moral power. Language trembled under the weight of his glowing thoughts; the figures of rhetorical art were exhausted; the scenery of nature, from the mountain's top, the throne of the clouds, to the deep valley and the deeper world of waters, furnished his bold and impetuous imagery.

In the chapter from which the text is selected, the state of the Jewish nation is represented under the type of a vineyard :

Under the figure of a vine is represented the Jewish nation itself :

Under that of soil, the country promised them by Jehovah :

By the natural weakness of the vine, is represented their need of a helper :

By the care taken of it, the unbounded goodness of God :

By the unfruitfulness of this vine, the impious ingratitude of that people :

And under the type of laying waste the vineyard, the signal punishment in store for their aggravated transgressions.

THE VINE.

It was a goodly vine, planted by the hand of God. It was written, thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it; thou hast caused it to take deep root and it filled the

land : the hills were covered with its shadow, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

God chose his servant Abraham, to be the progenitor of the people represented by this beautiful allegory. He had commanded him to leave his native country, and to journey to a strange land, and in obedience to the voice of God, he set out without wavering, not knowing whither he was going. He was tried in the tenderest point, by being commanded to sacrifice the life of an only son—an only child, and he proved faithful. God made a covenant with him, and promised, that his seed should inherit the land where he was a stranger, even the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession : and that through him, all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

THE GOODNESS OF THE SOIL IN WHICH IT WAS
PLANTED.

This has a direct and particular reference to the land of Canaan, which was one of the most fertile countries in the world. It was so beautiful and so productive, that it was emphatically styled the vineyard of the Lord, the garden of the world, a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey. It was a country rich in corn, wine, and oil, covered with trees, plants, fruits, and flowers in the greatest profusion. The whole face of the country was diversified with a multitude of valleys and hills and mountains ; adorned with the most beautiful landscapes, and teeming with the riches, both of nature and of art.

Its skies were clear and serene. Its hills were full of fountains, whence issued myriads of crystal rivulets, and streams, meandering through the verdant vales and pleasant meadows below : and the glassy bosoms of its placid pools reflected the azure canopy of the ethereal vault. Universal joy and gladness filled the land. Songs and hallelujahs and the thrilling music, like that of Miriam's martial timbrel, swept up to heaven's blue arch.

Envious enemies soon perceived that God was with them, and were constrained, like Balaam, to exclaim, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! As the valleys, are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. Thus while they stood aloof and beheld the security and grandeur which, like a broad belt of living gold, encircled Israel, they wondered, they hated, but dared not molest.

ITS WEAKNESS.

The goodness of the vine, and the soil in which it was planted, could not protect it against the winds of heaven, or the ravages of the invader. The vine is a tender plant and easily injured. Its branches are so feeble that they need supporting, and require many pains and much labor to preserve them in life and vigor.

This was applicable to the Israelites. When they came out of Egypt, they had no civil constitution, no laws, no government. They had been debased by

long captivity, and thus rendered incapable of any heroic act, unless stimulated by some powerful motive. And such was their inconstancy, that at the slightest misfortune they looked back with unconquerable desires to the land where they had groaned so long under the lash of despotism. And even after they had been trained up for empire, and were put in possession of the promised Canaan, they were as much under the necessity of divine protection as when they were wandering in the wilderness.

Did they attempt any important movement in their own strength? They uniformly failed. Did they commence a war? They were certainly defeated. Did they make a boast of their strength, and glory in the prowess of their warlike deeds? A sudden and unexpected stroke from an unseen hand withering their laurels, was the inevitable consequence of their pride and presumption. For, saith the Lord, I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images. All their self-dependent schemes met the fate they deserved, they were broken in pieces. But when they went forward in the name and in the strength of the God of the armies of Israel, success and victory ever attended them.

THE CARE TAKEN OF IT.

In order that this vine might grow and flourish and bring forth good fruit, the most careful and unremitted attention was paid to it by the servants of God, spoken of as the dressers of the vineyard. They dug about its roots, and pruned its branches, rising up early and

lying down late. What could have been done more, saith the master of the vineyard, for my vineyard that I have not done in it.

The civil constitution of the Jews was of divine origin, and their religious institutions well calculated to retain in their breasts grateful remembrances of their Almighty benefactor. Their deliverance from Egyptian bondage—from the host of Pharaoh—the waters of the Red Sea, and from the dangers of the dreary desert, were continually brought to their view. Their children were early taught the history of their deliverances. The book of the law, ending with awful threatenings and gracious promises, was daily read in the hearing of the people.

Extraordinary means were used to preserve this people in the pure exercise of their religion and laws. Holy prophets, divinely commissioned, were raised from time to time to arrest their attention and ring an alarm in their ears. Signal displays of the power and justice of the Almighty were made to pass frequently before their eyes.—They had line upon line, and precept upon precept. He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not so dealt with any people.

ITS UNFRUITFULNESS.

This vine was a wholesome one. It was planted in a fertile soil, and the most unremitting care and attention were bestowed upon it; yet this very vine, under all these advantages, proved unfruitful.

How applicable was this, to the children of Is-

rael. Although their fathers were the favorites of heaven, although they were placed in the most eligible circumstances for divine culture, possessing advantages rarely bestowed upon mortals, they were a proud, wicked and perverse generation.—Notwithstanding the mighty efforts that had been made to instill into their minds the purest principles, and to preserve them a distinct people, free from the prejudices, ignorance and superstition of the heathen world, they became strange plants of a degenerate vine, either producing no fruit, or bringing forth sour grapes, which, when pressed, made drunk the nations around them.

In process of time, they descended from the lofty eminence they had held for ages, and after exhibiting, at various times, the most detestable features of moral depravity, they, at length, gave themselves up, wholly to their lusts, and losing all sense of shame, sunk into the grossest idolatry and rebellion, rendering themselves worthy of the most condign punishment. In addition to all this, they filled to the brim the measure of their iniquities, by despising and rejecting their Messiah, and scourging and crucifying the Son of God.

ITS DESTRUCTION.

I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up : I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, saith the Lord.

It is easy to conceive, how the wild beasts of the forest will desolate a vineyard, when its fences are thrown down and removed. Here, under the figure of laying waste a vineyard, God condescends to lay

before his people, the inevitable consequences of persisting in their sin, and to warn them against it.

This solemn threatening was awfully realized by the Jews. The spirit of the Lord having been so long grieved and insulted, now takes his everlasting flight from them. They are left naked and exposed to the

“ Tremendous threatening ! black as night it stands
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shakes a fearful dart,” —————

even the dart of divine indignation over a guilty land. The blood of the holy prophets is found in their garments. They had imprecated the blood of the Lord of life and glory upon their devoted heads. The day of their visitation having expired, the destroying Angel was now commissioned to go forth and slay them in all their cities. A dreadful, a blind infatuation seized them. God made their attachment to their formal, heartless ceremonies, a mean of their final overthrow. While they were engaged in the celebration of the passover, they would do nothing in defence of their city. Titus took this occasion to enter Jerusalem with his legions, fired the temple, destroyed the city and spread desolation and dismay throughout Judea.—The few wretched Jews, who escaped the edge of the sword, were either taken captive by their enemies or scattered over the earth, to wander like the blasted Cain, abhorred and hated by every people.

Their glory hath vanished like the mist from the mountain. The besom of destruction hath swept away their honors. The oblivious pall hath long since cov-

ered them. Obscurity hath spread her dark mantle upon the land of Palestine, and the cursed crescent of the Moslem waves over the crumbling fragments of Jewish granduer.

“ Weep for the harp of Judah’s broken shell ;
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt, the godless dwell.
Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest !
The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave !”

And why is this ? Because, notwithstanding all that had been done for this peculiar people, they would neither love, nor obey, nor worship God according to his requirements. Thus Jerusalem, fallen from her once exalted station, and weltering in the blood of her children, raises her warning voice to all succeeding nations. She speaks from the records of her fathers ; from the broken tribes of her wandering sons.

And not her voice alone proclaims the emptiness of human glory, the catastrophe of human wickedness. Other kingdoms have been broken ; other cities have been buried ; other nations have been extirpated. Where are Troy, Babylon, Athens, Thebes, Persepolis, and Palmyra ? Their ruins are sepulchred with the ashes of their founders.

“ Ah ! then in desolation cold
The desert serpent dwells alone,
Where grass o’ergrows each mouldering stone,
And stones themselves to ruin grown,
Are grey and deathlike old.”

Palmyra, the seat of proud kings, the emporium of science, the envy of her neighbors, the wonder

of the world, is no more. Her stately ruins may form a picture, her fame may paint a moral, but her power and her glory have long passed away.—Faded is her beauty, withered her strength, and humbled her pride. Her inscriptions are grown unintelligible, her heroes are forgotten.

With these reflections, let us take a short view of our own standing as a nation. O, that we may be admonished to pursue that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and to avoid that sin which is a reproach to any people !

OUR FOREFATHERS LIKE THOSE OF THE JEWS WERE PIOUS.

Those intrepid men who first planted the rose of Sharon in this land of strangers, and unfurled the banner of the cross in these western wilds, were disciples of Jesus,—a band of holy pilgrims in quest of freedom, and the rights of conscience.—They were exiles from their native homes ; and many of them poor and penniless, but they were rich in faith and heirs of the promises. Few high sounding titles distinguished them from their fellows ; but theirs was a higher distinction than princes can confer—their names were enrolled in heaven.

Guided by the good providence of God, they came forth from among their persecutors, traversed the wide waste of waters, touched upon these happy shores, and here planted the goodliest vineyard under heaven.

“ ’Twas then, by faith impelled, by freedom fired,
By hope supported, and by God inspired,—

'Twas then, the pilgrims left their fathers' graves,
 To seek a *Home* beyond the waste of waves ;
 And where it rose, all rough and wintry, *Here*,
 They swelled devotion's song, and dropped devotion's tear."

IS NOT OUR VINEYARD FRUITFUL ?

What country on earth can boast of such richness and variety of soil ! Here we may range as through an extensive garden, and expatiate midst flowers and fruits, the products of every clime. Here too, mines are daily pouring forth the purest of metals, and quarries the richest of marble. Here are forests of vast extent, whose waving tops brush the loitering clouds. Is not this a goodly heritage, which our pious fathers have procured for us by their courage, their industry, and their perseverance ? A little more than two centuries ago, and the foot of civilized man had not pressed these shores : nor the genius of religion as yet erected her temples. Our rivers and our extensive lakes were unfrequented and silent, save when the noise of the Indian's paddle, broke the stillness of the scene ; or when the savage war-whoop echoed from the surrounding hills, and reverberated along their solitary shores. But now these waters supply the innumerable wheels of the busy manufacturer, or bear on their bosoms, the luxuries of every clime. Now we behold the cattle on Columbia's thousand hills, or scattered over her wide extended plains, while plenty opens her boundless stores, and with a lavish hand distributes her richest blessings to her favored sons.

"O stranger ! stay thee, and the scene around
 Contemplate well, and if perchance thy home

Salute thee with a father's honored name,
Go call thy sons—instruct them what a debt
They owe their ancestors.”

ARE WE NOT PECULIARLY FAVORED OF THE LORD ?

Yes, my brethren, our blessings are innumerable. The valor of our fathers has long since broken the iron yoke of European bondage. Every nation of the earth regards us with interest, and every despot feels the insecurity of his throne, as he contemplates our growing strength, and observes the progressive march of our republican principles in the old world. Once they dared to abuse our Executive, our Congress and our State Legislatures. Once they dared to insult our public ministers, and force into their service our generous mariners.—But now, how changed the scene ! They consult our wishes ; they respect our rights ; they *honor* our name.

Neither is there, now, any obstruction to the progress of our holy religion, among us. The most powerful and encouraging motives to a genuine conversion to God, and a holy life of obedience, are continually spread before us.

We enjoy the exalted privileges of the Gospel, in an eminent degree. At this moment it is exerting a wonderful influence over the different relations and modifications of life. Its inestimable blessings are realized in almost every section of our blessed country. A spirit of evangelical enterprise has gone out into society, prompting christians to the performance of the most noble deeds, and preparing the way for the moral revolution of an enslaved world.

Could superstition once obscure the light of divine truth? Its clouds have been long since dispelled, by the revival of literary and religious knowledge. Could prejudice once pervert our judgment? A liberality prevails at the present day, unknown in former times. The barriers, which had long prevented a union, among the various sects of religion, are gradually giving way before the majesty of mind, that has broken from its leading strings, and, towering to its native skies, is now consecrated to the cause of 'Christ and the church.' Could persecution once alarm our fears? We now hear no hierarchial prohibitions thundering from the papal throne. The faggots of bigotry have never gleamed upon our shores ;—its martyrs never bled upon our sod. No inquisitorial familiars infest our cities, watch our private retreats and pounce upon our domestic retirements, like the blood thirsty, midnight assassin. Nor do myriads of hellish harpies, clad in the robes of sanctity, gnaw, like the never-dying worm, upon our vitals. Protected by good and wholesome laws, we may follow the dictates of our consciences, and worship him alone, who is our Father, our Deliverer, our God !

Truth is our shield, its beacon our guide, its bosom our home, and its plaudit our reward.

YET IN OURSELVES WE ARE WEAK.

Our nation, with her unbounded territories, amazing advantages, and vast resources, must eventually fall from her high estate, should she become forgetful of him in whom alone is everlasting strength. Our proud bul-

warks, strong towers, and numerous fortresses cannot guarantee our safety, secure to us our national blessings, or perpetuate our sacred liberties, if the God of battles, the captain of the host of heaven, turns his arms against us—if he withdraws his chariots and horsemen, and plucks up the walls of brass which he hath raised about us,—if he inscribes upon our temples—the glory is departed,—and thunders from his superb palace the dreadful sentence—let us go hence,—they are joined to their idols,—then the bold monarch of the feathered world would soon falter in his towering flight, and descend with trembling pinions; his enemy would snatch the arrows from his talons, and dash to atoms the diadem of his glory.

Let us now inquire, are we, as a people, grateful to him who led us triumphantly through all our oppressions, preserved our fathers from the tomahawk of the savage, made us victorious in battle, and secured a glorious independence for our country?

Do we generally emulate the example of our pious fathers? Do we regard as we ought the precepts of our revered Washington? Let the conscience of every man answer. Why is intemperance permitted to stalk abroad in the open face of day? Why, in many places, are the Sabbaths of the Lord profaned, his sanctuary deserted, the special operation of his Holy Spirit sneered at, and his Gospel denied, explained away, and despised? Why so much apathy, so little of the soul and spirit of piety in the duties and enjoyments of this day? Why have we yet so many citizens as much distinguished for gaming and debauchery, as for talents

and influence in society? Why is our native soil continually satiated with the blood of her sons, shed by the hand of *fashionable murderers*, in violation of all moral obligation? And why are these enormities so generally regarded either with indifference, or with approbation and applause?

In view of these things, let us consider, that it is as true of nations as individuals, that sin, in its very nature, tends to temporal and eternal ruin; and that the more nations are exalted in point of privilege, the more aggravated their sin, and the more signal will be their punishment. How striking the parallel between the Jewish nation and our own, in respect to origin, progress and distinguished privileges and blessings. God grant that the parallel may extend no further!

It is perfectly obvious, from reason, scripture and observation, that one thing, and that *one only*, can effectually stop the torrent of our national sin, which is wafting us, as it has done other nations, down into the vortex of destruction,—and that is the prevalence of the pure and undefiled religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will render us invincible, when other resources are of no avail. The spirit of pure benevolence and christian zeal, glowing upon our altars, and breathing through our land, will chase the demon of destruction from our shores, and give health, activity and vigor to our constitution and laws. And, while the destroying angel marches in terror beyond the waters of the Atlantic, bowing the necks of proud monarchs, driving the ploughshare of ruin through their enslaved dominions, and shaking the foundations

of the eastern hemisphere,—America will be seen coming up out of the wilderness, terrible as an army with banners, travelling in the greatness of the strength of the Lord of Hosts, going forward in her honorable career, from conquering to conquer.

It becomes us, then, as cordial christians, as true lovers of our country, this day, to arouse from our sloth, in the best of all causes,—the cause of Zion. We have not a moment to lose. Our country is in danger ;—our all is at stake ! Come, my people, saith the Lord, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : Hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold ! the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.

Let us, this day, unite our fervent prayers at the throne of grace, for a special out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, throughout our land, as the only effectual agent in the work of *national repentance* and *reformation*—in the preservation of our civil and religious liberties—in the consecration of this *western world* as a vast theatre of *millennial* piety and happiness,—and in raising up millions and millions of our fallen race, from the depths of sin and misery, to the realms of eternal *peace*, and *purity*, and *glory*.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
JUNE 9, 1825.

MR. PRESIDENT,

I CANNOT sufficiently express the glow of feeling that pervades my breast, as I rise on an occasion so interesting, as that which has convened us in this temple of christians. I rise, sir, to second the resolution offered by my reverend brother from New York,—“That we heartily approve of the exertions that are making by the various denominations of christians in Europe and America to send the Gospel into all the world; and that the success with which these exertions are attended demands our warmest gratitude to God, and should stimulate all the friends of missions to redoubled ardor in this glorious cause.” In seconding this resolution, I feel myself on truly christian ground—ground consecrated by the primitive christians, on which they raised a noble temple to peace, concord and

unity ; and although it has been shattered by the convulsions of contending parties, led on by a blind zeal, and many of its beautiful pillars broken and defaced, thanks be to God, the dawn of the latter day glory, beholds it rising from its ruins, beautiful and exact in its proportions,—a goodly edifice. How great is its extent already ! In the midst of christendom is its centre,—but where are its wings ? See them rapidly extending over heathen lands ! This day we throng these courts with joy, and hasten to plight our vows, and join hands at this hallowed altar. What God and our holy religion have joined together, let no man, with sacrilegious impiety, put asunder.

There never was a moment more auspicious, or a crisis more favorable to the cause of Christ. The signs of the times are peculiar and wonderful. The astonishing events of the past century—the fulfilment of prophecy—the glorious appearances in the christian church,—all conspire to raise our hopes and encourage our hearts. The set time to favor Zion has arrived ;—there is an increasing desire among christians for the spread of true religion, a growing regard for the sacred volume, and an intense interest felt for immortal souls by the servants of the sanctuary. The word of God, through the medium of the Bible Society, the honored daughter of the Missionary Society, is translating into all languages, and spreading among all people ; and foreigners, of the first distinction, are uniting with us in promoting this great object. We see evident signs of the speedy dissolution of all religions not founded in a revelation from God—of the return of the scattered

tribes of Israel, and of the descent of the redeeming angel upon Jerusalem—the temple and city of the living God. We see, too, what is most encouraging—early prejudices passing away, party names and distinctions fading from the christian's banner, and a union of hearts, hands and purses, unparalleled in the history of the church.

Never, during any former period, were such powerful and successful exertions made to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. The circle of christian benevolence has been astonishingly enlarged, and we do firmly believe it will continue to increase, until, like a golden zone, it shall surround the habitable globe.

Are not these signs and wonders that brighten upon the face of our moral heavens, the sure precursors of the final triumphs of the cross and the downfall of anti-christian oppression and error of every kind?

In this view, there is a splendid object of hope set before us ; and although there are obstacles still in the way, many of which appear almost insurmountable, they will avail but little before the march of the everlasting Gospel. In due time, every valley shall be exalted, every hill brought low ; the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain. Yes, sir, the little leaven is gradually, but surely and silently working its way through the whole lump. And it shall soon come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you ; for we have heard that God is with you. That the day is not far distant when these hopes shall be abun-

dantly realized, is evident, no less from Scripture, than from what has been already accomplished on the great theatre of Missionary labors. We rejoice, Sir, that these things are not imaginary. They are not the idle dreams of superstitious devotees—not the romantic expectations of bloody crusaders—not the visionary flights of wild enthusiasts—No ! these events are realities and have their being even in our midst ;—they are before us, and the rude son of the forest stands forth with the eloquence of nature to confirm their veracity. I have no hesitation in saying, that the cause of missions is the cause of God. That it shall never fall to the ground, is, therefore, our rejoicing ; it is based in principles that know no decay—over which human agency can have no control ; it rests on the rock of ages for support. It has already withstood the shock of all the united elements of a vain, unsanctified philosophy, and it will stand firm and stately amidst the ruins of time, till the whole redeemed earth shall have become a habitation of holiness—a temple consecrated to the purest worship, and filled with heaven’s own harmony.

When we consider the success that has crowned the faithful of all denominations of christians in sending missionaries to the heathen, our hearts overflow with gratitude to that Being whose promises support us—whose presence is certain victory. They have done nobly ! Throwing themselves, even while yet a feeble band, into the *Thermopylæ* of the moral world, they have engaged the combined powers of a more cruel and oppressive foe than Xerxes of Persia ; and al-

though the honor of being the first to cross the Rubicon, is awarded to the Wesleys and Whitefield and Coke, we will not withhold from others their meed of praise, nor be niggardly in rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's—tribute to whom tribute is due. If through any of them the sun of righteousness has darted one benignant ray upon the poor heathen, sitting in the region and shadow of death—if they have conducted one pure rill from Judah's fountain, to water and refresh one barren and thirsty spot in the vineyard of the Lord,—heaven bless them. Ephraim will not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim.

But, Sir, notwithstanding the great exertions that have been already made, and the influence that is now in successful operation to evangelize the world,—but little, comparatively, as yet has been accomplished. Hundreds of millions of immortal spirits are still in the hands of the enemy—ignorant, depraved and dark. These occupy the greatest proportion of the globe, and to these the Gospel must be sent. Here and there, it is true, are cultivated spots—gardens planted by the missionary, and watered by the river of life. But they are only thinly strewed over this bleak wilderness, while all the remainder is destitute of moral culture and sterile as Arabia's sands. While we speak, the siroc of a wide spread destruction is sweeping along this immense field—the altars of demons smoke with the blood of human victims—the car of Juggernaut rolls onward in bloody triumph—the Indian widow ascends the funeral pyre, a sacrifice to the manes of her deceased husband—the magnificent Ganges swells with

the life blood of its superstitious votaries—the scalping knife of the red man is brandished—the shrieks of human beings slaughtered in cold blood—the shouts of assembled multitudes maddened with demoniac fury, assail the christian’s ear. Is it possible, then, that we can look at these things, and remain cold and insensible? Shall our hearts remain frozen while mortals are perishing around us daily?—Shall we feel no anxieties, when Ethiopia stretches out her hands, manacled and bleeding? Shall we quietly sleep when the pestilence that walketh at noonday is desolating our world? Is it possible that we should faint when the rod of our glorious deliverer waves over the troubled ocean of difficulty before us, and we hear his voice, from the pillar of fire and of cloud which conducts the chosen band of Israel, bidding us,—go forward? Can it be that local prejudices, or sectarian feelings, shall affect us? Shall we offer apologies for our backwardness in this great work? Let us rather double our diligence, and, forgetting the things that are behind, bring all our tithes into the storehouse, and prove the Lord herewith, and see if he will not arise, terribly to shake the earth. Be assured that victory awaits us; and in the event of a coalition of all denominations upon the broad principles of christian philanthropy, we should soon behold a prostrate world yielding homage to the one true God. And why not unite? Are we not children of the same family, branches of the same root, streams from the same fountain, rays from the same sun—all tending the same way, though widely apart, though distinct in appearance—all having the

same origin—the same end? The field we occupy is extensive—our parish, sir, is not geographically defined,—it embraces the whole earth. There is room enough and work enough for us all. Let us then awake—arise—and, putting on the Lord's armour, march forward without rivalry, and without jealousy.

It is my decided opinion, sir, and I ground it upon the word of God, that a mere expression of our cordial approbation of the exertions which are making by the various denominations of christians is not sufficient. —We are to love, not in word, or in thought only, but in deed, and in truth. We should study to cherish the heaven-born principle of love and union, without dissimulation and without wavering. This would strike a blow in the world, that would be felt throughout christendom. The kingdom of darkness would be dismayed, its strongest bulwarks shaken, and the enemies of missions compelled to exclaim with Balaam,—Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. Let us then endeavor from this hour to convince the world that we are actuated by the highest motives. Let a reciprocation of feeling, an interchange of kind offices, an identity of interest, prevail over every thing else. This will contribute greatly to the blessed cause in which we are engaged. Let us embrace as christians, bidding one another—God speed. And if we cannot rank first in the lovely train of institutions that gem the christian hemisphere, we will determine not to be the last in lending our aid to our fellow laborers in the noble cause of missions, in cultivating the most liberal

sentiments, cherishing the most generous feelings, and multiplying acts of kindness. Thus, hand in hand, shall we all press forward in our honorable career, blessing and being blessed. We shall gather new strength as we advance ; our resources will increase ; and at every stage of our progress, we shall behold the accumulation of evidence, demonstrative of the mighty effects of christian union.

Who, then, are on the Lord's side ? Who among us lifteth up his banner ? What christian soldier feels his soul in arms and eager for the conflict ? The great trumpet in Zion summoneth us to the battle. The standard of Shiloh is raised. He, who rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm, is gone up before us. The Macedonian cry, echoed by a thousand nations, has already raised a slumbering world. From beyond the waters of the Atlantic, from Albion's cliffs, we are cheered. A new and holy impulse is given to christians in both hemispheres. Its vibrations are felt before the throne of God. The angel commissioned with the everlasting Gospel, is on the wing. The glad tidings echo through all the celestial orbs. The mountains tremble, they melt away. The valleys rise and are exalted above the hills. Fruitful grounds look beautiful, and barren deserts open in bloom. Seas are dried up, and the ransomed of the Lord pass over on dry land with songs and shoutings. And now is heard, even upon earth, the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
JUNE, 1826.

MR. PRESIDENT,

IN the whole range of human thought and human enterprise, we cannot select a more august, or a more illustrious subject, than the one which this evening brings before us. Such is its weight and importance, and so intimately connected with it, are the dearest interests of mankind in this world and in the next, it is with the most heart thrilling sensations I rise to second the resolution offered by my reverend brother ;—

“That the success which has attended the efforts of the various Missionary Societies of this and other countries, has been such as to encourage us to persevere in our exertions to evangelize the heathen, and to expect that the knowledge of the Lord will soon cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

In giving my hearty concurrence to what is expressed in this resolution, it will be natural to run over the ground of missionary operations, from their commencement, under the auspices of the great founder of our holy religion, down to the present day.

I do not come forward, Sir, to advocate the cause of missions. It needs no effort of mine to secure it a place, and an honorable one too, among the noblest institutions that adorn the christian name. The elements of which it is composed are imperishable; enemies can *now* have but little hopes of arresting its progress. It has ascended above the storm and tempest. It has been gradually, though imperceptibly, gaining a wide spreading influence, wonderful and unprecedented, until its attitude has, at length, become one of the most glorious and commanding ever contemplated by an immortal mind.

But, Sir, we are too apt to confine our views of the great missionary cause to that auspicious hour when it was first recognised by different religious denominations, as an ostensible auxiliary in the work of reformation, without considering that Christ and his apostles were missionaries, and that their example had never been entirely neglected even in the darkest ages. It is well known, Sir, that the society which we have the honor of representing this evening, has been always marked by the strongest features of primitive christianity, not merely as it respects the purity of its doctrines, the simplicity, order, and beauty of its church government, but also in the mighty energies it has for nearly a century put forth in carrying the ban-

bers of the cross victorious round the globe. Perhaps, then, it would not be wholly irrelevant to take a more catholic and extensive view of missionary effort, within the period of its efficient labors among the nations of the earth.

At the time of Christ's first gracious appearance in Jerusalem, the whole circle of the prophetic vision brightened. The partition walls, so long standing between Jew and Gentile, were now broken down by God manifest in the flesh, and a vast and almost illimitable field opened for the general diffusion of the light and glory of the christian religion. The first ages of christianity were distinguished by a noble display of piety, zeal, and fortitude under suffering, that has no parallel in the annals of time. And not until christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, do we perceive any very marked departure from its pure principles and practice. In a very short time, however, her glory departed, and a long night of moral darkness ensued, during which ignorance, superstition, and priest-craft, held their infernal orgies and swayed their bloody sceptres over the consciences of men. Notwithstanding the darkness of this night of gloom, there was now and then a solitary star seen twinkling on the distant horizon. At length the memorable reformation broke out, under the combined efforts of a few hardy spirits, who, emerging from the thick clouds with which they were covered, burst like fiery comets upon the astonished world, and drove back the appalling darkness upon itself. Again, we notice in the history of the church a fearful lapse, not so much into

gross errors probably, as into a state of formality without vital power; the letter took precedence of the spirit, till unmeaning rites and ceremonies again constituted the *summum bonum* of religion. But even in this interval there was some salt in the church that preserved it from total destruction. Such were Baxter, the Henrys, and Law, and Flavel, men eminent, for their zeal and devotedness to the cause of the Redeemer. But the glory of the church was in the wane until the last century, when the Wesleys, Whitefield, and Fletcher, and many other men of God were raised up and qualified by the Holy Ghost, to revive primitive christianity in the world, and bring it forth from the rubbish that had been accumulating for ages. They pursued a novel path, it is true, but one, if we may reason from the wonderful effects of their ministry, exactly suited to the spirit of the times, and the degraded state into which pure and undefiled religion had fallen. Theirs was purely an apostolic spirit. It seemed as if the ashes of the first martyrs had been reanimated. Their course was rapid beyond example, and they were, by their labors, instrumental in promoting powerful religious excitements, the most extraordinary that had occurred since the days of the apostles. The mighty power of God, like an overwhelming torrent, bore down all opposition before them—attesting to the truth of their preaching, so that gainsayers were silenced, and a general alarm given to the enemies of the cross throughout Europe. They advanced upon the foes of God and man, with the intrepidity and confidence of the shepherd lad, trusting

alone in the arm of omnipotence for success. Not satisfied with skirmishing on the outskirts of the enemy's dominions, they pushed the victories of Immanuel beyond the islands of Great Britain. Borne upon the wings of the angel in the apocalypse, which represents the almighty power of God, supporting his ministers in their arduous undertakings, they traversed sea and land, visiting the barbarous haunts of wild and savage Indians. The frigid regions of the north were penetrated—the parched, arid deserts of the south—around the poles and between the tropics. No place was impervious to this spiritual warfare.

The religious public received a new impulse at that interesting era—an impulse we feel at this moment, and which has already roused the energies and engaged the attention of saved multitudes. Many great and effectual doors are now open to a preached Gospel, and there are new ones daily opening. Obstacles once thought insurmountable are now removing out of the way. The blessed truths of God are on their march—they tread fearlessly on the heels of infidelity. They brave the votaries of Mahomet even in the midst of Mecca, and shake the Sultan on his throne. They are at this moment spreading themselves over the plains of Hindostan, arresting the Indian Moloch in his impious career; and have even appeared in classic Greece, and among the aboriginal nations of our own vast continent. They have proclaimed war against the man of sin, and from the centre to the circumference of his proud domains are vexing him with their incursions.

And are we not a part of the great, moral machine, now in operation to evangelize a world of sinners?— Does not this sacred hour announce the joyful tidings, that victory is still on Zion's side? Yes, for the angel of the everlasting covenant hath visited our happy land. The glad news of salvation by Jesus Christ, has reached our ears, and rejoiced our hearts; and as one of the thousands of Israel, we have come hither this day to add another and another trophy to the ensigns of power, and majesty, and conquest, that brighten along the ranks of the church militant upon earth.

Here then, is an occasion, hallowed by the holiest associations, disclosing a wide field for the achievement of nobler deeds than ever blazoned upon the page of a nation's history. The instruments of action are within our reach, and the power to go forward in our labors of love, although entirely of grace, is amply afforded to every true soldier of Jesus Christ. Bright prospects open upon us from every point of heaven, and from almost every section of the globe we hear the imploring voice of those who are ready to perish, mingled with the shouts of redeemed millions. We have every thing, then, to encourage us to proceed onward without wavering, until the Sun of righteousness shall have dispensed the bright effulgence of his holy beams far and wide over the dark places of the earth. And although since our last anniversary, the knell of the departed ones has fallen heavily upon our hearts, it has not damped the spirit by which we are actuated to hazard all for the souls of men. The pure flame of christian philanthropy still glows upon our

altars. Thanks be to God, there remain among us here and on the other side of the Atlantic, many devoted servants of Christ, fired with holy ambition, and panting for an opportunity to fill up the ranks of the missionary army. And shall *we* shut our ears upon the cries of those for whom Jesus Christ hath shed his most precious blood? Shall *we* be backward *now*, at such an interesting period of the conflict, while the enemy, fearfully discomfited, feels the insecurity of his hold on men's minds? Shall we refuse to send the torch of inspiration to the heathen nations who look up to us for direction, for counsel, for light? Shall they be blasted with the tidings of our timidity and desertion, and turn away again to their idols in hopeless despondency?

We stand here this day in view of all that is dignified in morals, and sublime in conception! Are we not summoned hither by the mandate of Jehovah, to carry into effect his gracious designs towards fallen man—to supply poor perishing souls with immortal food—to refresh the thirsty inhabitants of the desert with water out of the rock—to widen and extend the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom, till the whole earth is covered with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea?

What can exceed these glorious purposes? What angel mind could imagine any thing commensurate with the benevolence of this design? Is not the image of God reflected upon its every feature? Does it not come to us sanctioned with the authority and sealed with the signet of the Lord of Hosts? Are we not,

while aiding the steps of the missionary, doing the work of evangelists ourselves? Do we not become the favored instruments of raising immortal minds from the depths of sin and depravity to a seat among kings and princes around the throne of God? Shall we grow faint or wax cold in this work of mercy, while hundreds of millions of immortals are now feeling the intensity of expectation, while the sacred symbols of Jehovah's presence are elevated upon the tops of the mountains? God forbid! Let us arise and clothe ourselves in the armor of the sanctuary. The precursors have gone up before us. The sun of divine love is ascending the heavens, and blazing forth in all the grandeur of meridian glory. The benighted ones, emerging from the valley of the shadow of death, hail with joy its reflected splendors.

Hosts of redeemed men are advancing on all hands. The Lord God of battles is at their head. All the harps of Zion are swept. The iron bolts of despotism are drawn back, and the dungeons of ignorance are giving up their incarcerated millions; they are coming forth to light, to joy, to liberty. We hear a voice on the tops of the mulberry trees! The voice of him who sitteth between the cherubim commands us to go on, undismayed—unbroken.

The walls of superstition already totter on their base, and every idol falls to the ground. The cursed traffic in human flesh is ceasing; and the slave ship no longer darkens the blue wave of the Atlantic;—war and discord are retreating back to hell. The almighty, all conquering Jesus is riding forth, subduing our rebel

race to the obedience of his peaceful laws. From the burning wheels of his triumphal chariot his winged angels are commissioned, and soon all nations shall be seen bowing before the throne of God, uniting in one song, and worshipping before one altar.

DEVOTIONAL FRAGMENTS.

DEVOTION.

THE beauty which irradiates the countenance of the devotional, surpasses all that has ever appeared on earth. To define it would be to define spirit ; to paint it would be to catch the living thoughts of the soul ; to gaze upon it is to look on the blessed face of Jesus, as his beauty is reflected in the countenances of his children.

Yet this flower of devotional beauty is not found in the torpor of the frigid zones, and wears a paleness even in the temperate zones of christianity. It is under the full and direct glories of the Sun of righteousness that its loveliness becomes like the rose of Sharon, and the fragrance of its spices flows out. The devotion of the head may lend an intellectual flash to

the eye, but the deep movement of the heart, and the stirring up of the tender, holy affections must give those more than earthly colorings to the human face that shines with the graces of prayer.

The great secret of beauty is to engage soul and body in some object of pursuit so pleasing and desirable that every faculty of the spirit shall sweetly harmonize in its attainment, and borrow a resemblance in the delightful approximation. So nature, enamoured by the celestial beauty of virtue, and drawn towards her pure shrine, is baptized with her loveliness, and arrayed in her immortal robes.

AN EVENING IN EUROPE.

The evening was serene and beautiful—the last mellow tints of the setting sun were hovering over the western sky and reflecting their softened radiance on the bosom of nature. There was a sweet stillness in the air, and not a breeze ruffled the leafy grove or swept over the green fields.—The great eye of day had been gently closed, and night, attended by her glittering train, was just opening on the distant verge of heaven.

It was the hour for musing—pleasant for meditation and prayer. The day had passed over with its usual accompaniments of bustle and noise and show, and I

was returning from the city to the sweet spot I called my home, in a romantic little village in the suburbs, when I was suddenly arrested by an unusual sound arising out of a mud hovel on the road side, partly hidden by a hawthorn hedge. It appeared like the voice of one in earnest prayer. My curiosity was aroused because I knew the persons that resided in the cabin were of the most depraved character. Indeed I had often hurried by to avoid hearing their profane language. I stopped at the low opening that was intended for a door, and without any further ceremony, as I did not wish to disturb them, passed gently in. But what was my astonishment when I beheld the whole family on their knees; and the aged father, instead of heaping curses on his wife and children, as had been his practice for years, praying most fervently, accompanied by bitter cryings and tears. I stood riveted to the spot.

After they had risen, the old man came forward, and grasping my hand he wrung it heartily, and bursting into tears pointed towards a little boy who stood in the corner of the room with a Bible in his hand. "There," said the old man, "there stands my deliverer. O sir, he is an angel; he has saved me and mine from ruin." I turned to the child and beheld one of my own Sabbath school boys. A few words explained every thing. The Sabbath school scholar lived near this wicked family, and had an opportunity of seeing their bad conduct. His heart was touched with pity for them, and he contrived to get them a Bible, visited them frequently, and at last through divine

grace was made instrumental in saving them from total destruction. I passed on towards home, admiring the goodness of God in using such feeble instruments to promote his own glory.

LINES

On the death of REV. DR. PAYSON, of Portland, Maine.

A champion of the cross is smitten down
 Upon the battle field. His soul away
 On snow white clouds to heaven was borne ;
 His voice no more on Zion's walls shall ring.—
 Unhelmeted, unarmed—his warfare o'er—
 The victory won—the laurels gather'd
 Behold the man of God with glory crown'd.

Is heard in Israel's host the sound of wo ;
 Along the lines a lamentation breaks—
 The trumpet mourns a great man fallen low,
 But has a triumph in its measur'd tone,
 For not ingloriously he fell. The shout
 Of victory hung upon his dying lips,
 And death's cold terrors could not chill him ;
 He stood on Jordan's shore, and longed
 To be with Christ.—

Voices from heaven are in the stilly air—
 Loud songs are heard of holy minstrelsy,
 As Payson's spirit wings empyrean space.
 He's clothed in white—the starry gems enwreath

His sainted brows—an angel's harp he strikes
 And sweeps the sounding chords with songs divine.
 In memory's deep recess his image lies ;
 For, in the temples of his God, are found
 The pillars that he wrought with workman hand—
 The lovely plants he rear'd and taught to bloom
 In gardens watered with his tears—all speak
 His pious care.

Forget thee and thy prophet's harp ? Oh, no !
 The strings are broken, but thy voice is still
 Abroad. It wakes in gospel thunderings,
 Arousing hearts on which thy counsel pour'd.

Farewell,

Thou man of God, till towers collapse—till graves
 Are riven—till the trumpet sounds an alarm
 In heaven : then Oh, my brother, shall we meet,—
 And part no more.—

SONNET.

Calvary's brow is dark. The sun is pale,
 And thunder uttereth a fearful voice—
 The tread of earthquake shakes the hill and vale,
 While demons in their revelry rejoice.
 The multitude had fled like frightened sheep,
 But sheeted ones from their cold graves arise—
 As if the judgment trumpet broke their sleep,
 They fix on earth their dim, sepulchral eyes.
 Alone—deserted—Jesus yields his breath—

He bows his head in innocence and dies,
 And gives his sorrows and his form to death ;
 A mailed Roman stands apart and cries,
 By nature's terror waking signals aw'd,
 This truly is the Christ—the Son of God !

THE DEPARTED YEAR.—1827.

The year hath breathed its last—its hopes and fears—
 Deep burthened with the sighs and hapless groans
 Of broken hearts and friendship's nameless pang—
 All, all, have gone. Oh what false vows have risen
 From Lethe's realm, and plighted promises
 To mock confiding love,—and stain the page
 Of heaven's high chancery, where hath been traced,
 By the recording angel's iron pen,
 The immortal volume of the world's account.

Upon its silken wing the year hath fled ;
 Return it will no more ; no power save his,
 Who rolls the wheels of universe along
 The brow of the eternal hills, and spans
 Eternity, forever reaching on,
 Can blot the graven record from the skies—
 And long before the crush'd and leafless one
 Shall rise again and bloom in vernal charms !

With what a desolating hand the year
 Hath swept the earth ! Thousands, on whom its smiles
 In morning freshness play'd, are dark in night ;
 The tender bosom, in whose lov'd embrace

Reposed the cherub borrow'd from the skies,
 Hath sunk in death's cold sleep on pillow'd clods—
 Never again below the sun to bless
 The eyes of innocence, or gladden him
 Whose widowed heart will ever turn to thee,
 Thou bygone year, with bitter thoughts and tears
 Ensteep'd in memory's sorrow waking urn.

The bright, the beautiful, the wise, thine eye
 Hath seen in robes of light, aerial, plumed,
 And scarcely touching the untrodden earth,
 So high the beatings of their morning joy ;—
 Again—thine eye fell on their faded forms,
 Where death's cold hand his ebon signet plac'd—
 The rose had withered on the damask cheek—
 The eye no longer shone—the arched brow
 Was cold as Parian marble, with whose snow
 It vied in whiteness.—

Aye, and didst thou give the warning voice
 To him who drove ambition's fiery steeds
 And whisper in the thunder of his course
 The holy, kindly message—death is near ?
 And wast thou slighted and thy moments lost,
 Or scatter'd on the winds of night, as if
 They could return to fill the spendthrift hand
 That trifled with the boon—the pearl of bliss ?

Though gone—still thou shalt stand alone. The page
 That holds the doings of this lower world,
 Within thy brief sojourning here, is mark'd
 With lines imperishable as heaven's high arch ;
 Sublimity is thine—thy moral grandeur rears
 In Eden's sunshine her immortal towers.

The homage of a million hearts, subdued
 By grace divine—all grateful for thy space
 And counted sands,—heavenward thy wing hath borne ;
 New hallelujahs from unwonted tongues
 Have hymned thee sweetly to thy dying hour.

* * * * * The coming year—
 Oh, precious period of the golden age !
 Count all its moments priceless, more than gems,—
 And dearer than the apple of thine eye,—
 And holy as the star begirded fane
 The spotless virgins guard with pious care.

SONNET.

The heavens grew black—the tempest's voice was high—
 The marshall'd clouds in mountain masses hung—
 The thunder broke the pavement of the sky,
 And o'er the earth and sea its terror flung.
 A bark upon the foaming billows lay—
 It rode the roaring surf—the maddening tide,
 And roll'd beneath the maniac lightning's ray ;—
 But Jesus slumbered in the vessel's side.
 The sound of winds and waves—the thunder's tone,
 Could not disturb the sleeper's dream of heaven,
 Yet roused he up at intercession's groan ;
 He spoke—and far the tempest fiend was driven—
 His clarion blew the blast of storm no more,
 And seas and thunders hush'd their booming roar.

LINES

On the death of REV. JOHN HUTCHINSON, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who died in Boston, Dec. 1827—aged 21.

The youthful herald is no more. His work
Is early done. The dawn of hope that gleam'd
Upon his course of promise, now is shrouded deep
In sullen glooms along the vale of death.

'Twas good to see him die—to note the star
With beauteous beaming sink in western skies
To keep its vigils in that better world ;
'Twas sweet to hear the music of his words,
As if some kindred ones in angel tones
Held converse with earth's dwellers ere the morn
Smote on the hills and tipt the spires with gold ;—
Such was his voice as if the furtive winds
Had borne a wandering strain from seraph lyres.

Oh, how triumphant, when the stripling bared
His bosom to the blow and calmly bade
The monster do his worst !—For he had bath'd
His soul in heaven's own dews, and deeply thought
How Jesus went into the vale alone,
Shook its unearthly caverns, broke the crown
And reft the sting, and lighted glorious fires
Along the mansions of the voiceless tomb.

'Twas right to call him home ere yet the noon
Of manhood—while the tender dews of youth
In grace and beauty lay upon his lips ;
The Lord doth all things well—his sickle reaps
The early field, but tares are left to burn.

No tear is on our cheek—no sound of wo
 Disturbs the lovely sleeper's sleep of death ;
 For in the resurrection he shall find
 Those whom his God hath given to him,
 And bind his brows with an eternal crown,
 On which shall burn the starry " gems of souls,"
 Lending new beauty to the jasper walls.

SONNET.

The sisters mourned their only brother dead.
 The stone was roll'd away—and Jesus wept—
 While bowing o'er that lowly resting head,
 His tears bedew'd the earth where Lazarus slept ;
 He groaned in spirit—Jordan's waters shook—
 The tyrant death, upon his lightning track,
 Saw Him, before whose high, commanding look,
 He bore, in haste, his ghastly victim back ;
 A mightier than he had said—come forth—
 And lo, the Stygian cerements broke—
 The voice of storm roll'd from the angry north,
 And Lazarus, the pale, cold sleeper, woke ;
 For He, the resurrection and the life,
 Can rein the steeds of death in nature's mortal strife.

DEDICATORY HYMN.

The gorgeóus temples, Lord, are thine,
 That bow beneath a thousand years,
 Whose walls dark ivy wreaths entwine,
 Whose aisles are worn with mourners' tears.

And there are towers that rise to thee
 Beyond the sapphire arch of heaven—
 The temples of eternity,
 To thy redeemed children given.

Yet, from the starry halls of light,
 Thy Spirit wings its viewless way,
 And comes in power and glory bright
 To fill these humble walls to-day.

To-day—as if in heaven, we sing,
 And raise the song of sacred praise,
 Until this hallow'd court shall ring
 With our triumphant, grateful lays.

We praise thee, Jesus, that thy name
 Has wak'd a feeble echo here,
 And kindled in our souls a flame
 To burn through heaven's eternal year.

Oh triumph in the Holy One,
 Whose hand hath led us safe along,
 Until these temple walls were done—
 Oh, raise to heaven a glorious song.

DEDICATORY HYMN.

In some far off, uncertain day,
 This house shall be no more,
 And rude winds through these arches play
 With melancholy roar.

O then, as corner stones adorn
 The temple's perfect height,
 May thousands at this altar born,
 Bestud the courts of light.

May thousands at this sacred shrine,
 Catch the inspiring flame
 That rolls its volum'd wreaths divine
 Around a Saviour's name.

Let tones of music break along
 This consecrated dome,
 And wake the loud, triumphant song,
 When heaven becomes our home.

DE WITT CLINTON.

Columbia's Eagle leaves his mountain throne,
 To wave his solemn wing in grief alone—
 Death's trappings shade the standard-bearer's brow,
 And his high heart is desolated now :—
 For ah! his sun-lit eye, athwart the gloom,
 Saw arrows shooting, charged with mortal doom ;
 They fell—and demons laughed ; but millions wept,
 And one loud cry the chords of anguish swept !

Cold on the Alleghany's solitude,
 Where man's exploring steps can ne'er intrude,
 The standard-bearer spread his azure field,
 Recall'd his stars, and bade the whirlwinds yield

The stern unfurlings of his empire sheet,
 And trod its living folds beneath his feet ;
 For never should his flag of triumph wave,
 That hour when CLINTON found his patriot- grave.

His eye, serene in sorrow's agonies,
 Along earth's bosom saw the inland seas
 With silver murmur kiss the ocean streams ;
 Then, like illusions, or Arcadian dreams,
 The roar of waters overpast the hills,
 And cheer'd the vallies with rejoicing rills ;
 The torrents call'd on CLINTON's glorious name,
 And gave their channels to his deathless fame.

He saw the halls of legislation dim—
 He heard the sons of science wailing him ;
 And gloom was on the altar, and the fires
 Lay lambent on the heav'n-directed spires ;
 The incense, burthen'd, roll'd its prostrate cloud,
 And prayer became the patriot's fragrant shroud
 To warm the icy hand of destiny,
 And dress him for a bright eternity !

But lo ! the heav'ns were brighten'd, and the shade
 That hung on mountain rock, and sylvan glade,
 Bow'd down before a mild, immortal eye—
 The genius came—her name was History ;
 She claim'd her own, and gave her trumpets tongue
 To place his name immortal ones among :—
 Then sorrow's dreary, sad enchantment broke,
 And far and wide, earth's clarion voices woke.

MEMORY.

How oft a gleam of other days
 Like quivering lightning round us plays,
 While mem'ry, imaged up the while,
 Entrances with its pensive smile,
 Transports us to the home we love,
 And bids us through our green fields rove.
 On fairy pinions hurried o'er
 A vast wide space, we touch the shore,
 And scent the freshness of the breeze
 That kiss'd the rich o'ershading trees,
 Where pure white blossoms fringed the hills,
 Or stretched along the purling rills,
 Touching the streamlets edged with flowers,
 Or springing up 'mid arching bowers.

THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

The morning dawned, its glowing dies
 O'er heaven a mellow softness threw ;
 New glories lit the ambient skies,
 And rose the sun with ruddy hue.

- . It was in truth a lovely morn
 To break upon the tearful eye
 Of her, who watched with heart forlorn,
 Her angel cherub, doomed to die.

'Twas beautiful, as if some look
 From purest spirits, hovering nigh,
 Had o'er the scene new glories shook,
 And filled with fragrance earth and sky.

'Twas calm—no murmuring breezes rung,
 Nor nature spoke in that lone hour—
 'Twas sweet—for angels' voices sung
 As drooped the lovely, blooming flower.

It turned its little head and sighed,
 And fluttering, stretched abroad its arms—
 We kissed it as it softly died,
 And wept to see its faded charms.

Sweet innocent, farewell ! thou'rt gone
 To mingle with the blest above,
 And we are left to weep alone,
 And still thy mem'ry fondly love.

Long as the vital spark remains
 We'll dream of thee, and speak thy name,
 And when our life to evening wanes,
 Our babe, in heav'n, with joy we'll claim.

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

There is a Sun whose holy light
 The fires of heaven eclipse—it glows
 Above the clouds of sin and night,
 And through the world its radiance throws.

On Eden's bowers, its placid ray,
 Like sunlight on the hills afar,
 Reveals the dawn of gospel day,
 And shines, the lost ones' polar star.

The lights of science feebly burn—
 The meteor flash of glory dies—
 Ambition fills the storied urn—
 In dust, earth's tarnish'd splendor lies ;—

But everlasting fires adorn
 The firmament of truth and grace,—
 First lighted on that gladsome morn,
 When mercy shone in Jesus' face.

Through sorrow's gloom, or deathlike shades,
 This penetrating glory beams,
 Like evening's star when daylight fades—
 Like memory on life's fitful dreams.

THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE PAST IS SWEET.

Is then indeed the remembrance of the past sweet ?
 O yes, but it is sweet only to those who can look back
 with joy upon a life well spent—to those whose days
 have been clear and calm and sunny—whose hours
 have been well expended, and every moment weighed,
 as misers weigh their gold.

Past time is sweet when we can see floating upon
 its bosom the useful actions of our early existence,

reflected there from their record on high, where they are to remain forever, the perpetual mémorials of our piety and virtue.

It is sweet when we can go forth reaping the fruit of our labor and toil, and hear the new generations that rise up in our old age pronounce us blessed. Yes, even the remembrance, then, though the past itself has fled, will be sweet, and green, and fresh. It will give out every feature faithfully, and we shall find ourselves expanded, like the sun at setting, and like him too our appearance, though not so brilliant and imposing to the eye, will be round and glorious, while we shall feel the truth of the promised renewal of all that was worthy in this life on the morning of the resurrection. Then, when we shall have put off this mortal coil, the remembrance of the past will buoy us above the ruins of a fading world, and give us peace in the presence of our Maker.

THE SABBATH SCHOLARS.

At the foot of a lofty hill, crowned to the summit with the richest verdure, a miserable mud cabin peeped out from among encircling brush wood and straggling elms. A wreath of smoke, curling up through the green trees, was the only sign that met my eye of its being inhabited. The sun had just risen, and over the deep blue heavens the thin clouds lay sleeping.

A stillness pervaded the spot, and I felt a thrilling sensation creep over me as I drew near the house of mourning. I paused at the entrance. A low murmuring sound stole upon my ear, and again all was hushed. I gently opened the door and bent myself forward, to ascertain, unnoticed, what was passing within. I saw at the first glance that death had been there. The apartment, on the threshold of which I stood, was of the meanest construction. It was without a single piece of furniture deserving a name. In one corner of it a dead body lay stretched out, very slightly covered with a tattered coat, and a cold, horrible feeling ran through my very soul, and I should probably have shrunk away from any further investigation, if I had not been suddenly arrested by a soft, sweet voice, mingled with a low death groan, that seemed to issue from the same apartment. I turned my head around, and beheld a sight that chained me to the ground. O, it was heart-thrilling to behold ! On a bundle of straw, a woman, somewhat in years, lay apparently in the agonies of death. Near her head, reclining in deep sorrow, was a beautiful little half naked child. On one side a lovely girl, about thirteen years of age, knelt. A Bible clasped in her thin, slender hands, with which she was endeavoring to comfort her dying mother. I instantly recognized two of my Sabbath school children. The meeting was affecting. They had been without food for some days. The mother died next day in the triumphs of that faith which her little daughter taught her out of the Bible.

The girls grew up to be respectable members of society, and one of them has been a teacher in a Sabbath school for several years.

RELIGION A SOURCE OF HAPPINESS.

There is no subject presented to the immortal mind, so fascinating as true religion. All other subjects after a while weary us, and are altogether incapable of yielding that satisfaction which we need, and without which we are poor, and dark, and lonely. For after all, what is the world's frown, or indeed even friendship's warm embrace, and pleasant smile, and delightful intercourse? What is any thing in these low grounds, be it sad, or joyous, prosperous, or adverse, life or death, without the pure consolations of the Gospel, the glorious hopes of immortality? O, there is something in the religion of the Redeemer that lightens the heart's sad burden, and buoys us above the waters of affliction. In vain, while we feel its influence, do the storms rage and the winds blow—in vain do blackening clouds fling their murky shadows across our path, and the lightnings play around our head. Religion, heaven's messenger, on wings of love, flies to our relief. Her hand smooths the ruffled brow of the contending elements, commands the rough winds to be still, and arrests the thunderbolt ere it destroys.

THE FUNERAL.

On the brow of a green hillock that gently rose over a sweet romantic village, I found myself in the middle of spring, after I had taken a long ramble through wood, and copse, and field, and garden. Spread out before me lay the varied and enchanting works of a Divine artist in all their simplicity, harmony and beauty. Here and there were interspersed the frail works of man. The day was uncommonly fine. A glorious sun was pouring his fervid beams upon creation's renewed and lovely face. No angry clouds were marshalled over the blue welkin, but deep and clear it looked as if the spirits of departed ones were lingering on its confines. The green buddings of a glowing spring had drank up all the shining pearls of night, and the feathered songsters of the grove were singing their jocund songs.

I involuntarily cried out, such was the effect of the scene with which my soul was ravished—Here no despoiler's foot has been. Here health and peace and joy may revel, nor hear the wail of sorrow nor fear the touch of death. The lily that raises its fair and modest head beneath the friendly shelter of the branching oak could not have seemed more secure from winds and storms than this pleasant group of white washed cottages, under the protection of nature and of nature's God, from the intrusions of the last enemy of man. They were embosomed in a deep vale, and circled round and sprinkled over with all that romance ever thought or sung of fair Arcadian bowers.

While I was thus chained to the spot, and charmed with every object that met my eye, a slowly pealing sound stole upon the sweet zephyr, and falling mournfully on my ear, swept over the hill and died away in distant air. Another and another followed, and in a moment the whole train of thoughts in which I was about to indulge were forgotten. I looked intensely downward, and at the foot of the hill where I stood, I beheld a dark waving plume, and then a long train of sombre shadows, and then—ah ! it was death. He who is no respecter of persons nor places ; visiting alike the palace and the cottage—the dank and fetid air of a prison, and the sweet salubrious spots on which nature has lavished her richest ornaments. I hastily descended, but with far different sensations from those that had but a moment before ravished me with delight. So soon do sights of wo put us in mind of our latter end, and mar the fair face of all earthly happiness. When I arrived among the throng of mourners, they were preparing to pay the last obsequies to the dead. They had chosen a pleasant nook, overshadowed by a tufted rock, where a few straggling trees had rooted themselves. It was a sweet spot to repose in. A little beyond the grave, spring had flung a few wild flowers, on which the drops of morning were still glistening. As I drew nearer, the scene became too interesting for the state of my feelings, which by the sudden change they had undergone, were unprepared for the solemnities of a funeral. An aged man, on whose polished brow time had gently laid its hand, and the storms of many winters their silver, was bending over the dead.

There he stood like the scarred tree whose foliage the lightning had blasted—for his darling, his only child, the comfort of his old age was no more. A few days only had fled since she was lovely, and blooming, and beautiful; but the frost of death stole away her charms, and withered the roses on her cheek. In an unexpected hour the despoiler came; he breathed upon her, and she drooped her fair head upon the old man's throbbing bosom and died.

The scene was too touching, and I turned away. But the surrounding prospect had lost its charm. In vain the birds carolled up the sky, and the breath of spring fanned the air. O death, I exclaimed, why wilt thou thus disturb our joys, and spread thy funeral pall over the fairest works of God! I had indulged but a second in the unhallowed murmur when I heard the voice of prayer. I listened—my heart was affected; my mind became tranquil. Heaven opened on my eyes, my ears, and holy strains of celestial music from blessed spirits appeared to come down to earth. I looked towards the grave. The old man was suddenly inspired; his bending form seemed to ascend; his streaming eyes were raised to heaven; he spread out his arms as if bidding the disembodied one farewell; a moment looked, then meekly bowing his head, in a firm though subdued voice, said, Thy will be done, O Lord. The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.—The grave was soon filled up; the mourners slowly retired, and all around again assumed a smiling aspect, while a voice like the soft music of angels seemed to breathe

upon my ear these words, Know, mortal, that here thou hast no abiding city. There are fairer climes yonder. Prepare to meet thy God.

I resumed my walk, and ever since, when the beauties of nature call forth my admiration and excite my feelings, they are blended with the solemn consideration that we must soon bid adieu to the scenes of this earth, and our mortal part, however fresh and vigorous now, be buried in its cold and wintry bosom.

THE GOSPEL.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a system fraught with benevolence, full of interest and meaning, and exceedingly important, because of its special bearing upon the happiness of man, both here and hereafter. It exhibits in an eminently superior manner all that is great, and grand, and sublime in heaven and on earth. It holds converse with eternity, and develops the mysterious workings of providence, which had been for ages hidden from the keen gaze of the wisest of the ancients. It embraces the history of the creation of the world and of man—his fall—the promise of a Saviour—the preparations for the fulfilment of that promise—the birth of Christ—his labors, sufferings and cruel death—his resurrection and ascension—the coming of the Holy Ghost. It holds up man as a partner with the deity, traces his various relations to God, to other beings and

himself—his high standing in the scale of intelligence—the origin of the soul and its immortality. But what stamps a dignity upon it above all other religions, is the grandeur of its object, even the moral revolution of our whole world—an object truly worthy of its author, God, and commensurate with his power and ability to accomplish. To this end all the springs of pure beneficence, kindness and mercy, are broken up in Jesus Christ, and a wide field opened for the rich streams of salvation to flow freely to the hearts of all men. In short, the Gospel brings a message of peace and good will direct from the throne of God, sealed with his signet, and signed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

THE LAW.

The Law, no longer accompanied by thunderings and lightnings and the voice of a great trumpet which waxed louder and louder, assumes a more gracious aspect, because it is now blended with the mildness of the Gospel. The mountain of terrors is beheld but at a distance ; no black portentous clouds lower on its craggy summit ; no flaming cherubim with fiery sword guards its rugged base, but deserted, it stands alone, amid the frightful wilds of Arabia, silent as the eve of death : while the orient morning hath broken in upon the darkness of a long and dreary night, and the shadows of the Mosaic economy, and the thick mists of heathen-

ish error and superstition are rolling away from before the brightness of its rising. We now approach no blackness, nor darkness, nor tempest. Our spiritual Moses hath ascended into the heaven of heavens. He hath established a high altar on which a world may offer up the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. He hath commenced a splendid reign in the moral universe, and his heralds are gone forth to blow the trumpet of the Gospel to earth's remotest bounds.

TIME NEVER RETURNS.

As nothing can arrest, so nothing can recall time. Once gone, and he is gone, never to return ! Every moment, as it passes by, whispers to the poor pensioner on its bounty, farewell, forever. After he hath offered us the rich, the invaluable blessing, and we have rejected it, it cannot be recalled. Though we were to cry loudly after it, and with tears of blood invite its stay, regardless of our agonies it would move forward and return not. Yea, though we were to call from sunrise to sunset, and like Baal's prophets, tear ourselves with anguish, yet would time remain inexorably deaf to all our entreaties. As we cannot recall the past, so neither can we blot out the crimes with which the pages of our life's short day have been stained. The page we have sullied, neither angels nor men can

make fair. There the dark spots must remain—the mementos of our prodigality and indolence and stupidity. O then, let us improve the golden moments while they are ours ! Let us work while it is day, lest the night of death, wherein no man can work, come upon us suddenly.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Nothing this side of the eternal world fills the bosom of the christian, who is waiting for the consolation of Israel, with such a glow of holy rapture, as the glad tidings that redeemed ones are coming home to God, and that the cause of Christ is prospering upon earth. From the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, he beholds the sons and daughters of guilt and misery entering the kingdom of the Redeemer, and becoming the subjects of his grace. He sees the spreading glories of the cross, and rejoices in the trophies which are daily won by the church militant. These views inspire him with feelings of a truly sublime and elevated character, till, borne aloft upon the wing of inspiration, he looks forward with transporting triumph to the day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.

The appearances of the present age are of an eminently cheering character. They are encouraging beyond our most sanguine hopes. Our expectations are

outstripped, and, although a nation, as yet, has not been born in a day, the work of evangelizing the world is in progress. Sinners are bowing on every hand, and multitudes, that were but yesterday in open rebellion against the Majesty of heaven, have laid down their weapons of warfare, and are now arraying themselves under the banner of the cross. Infidelity is lowering her proud head ; the laurels of victory are withering on her brows, and her giant tread no longer shakes the mountain of the Lord's house. The engines of ignorance, bigotry, and superstition, are weakened. Every thing around us is prophetic of a great moral revolution. The mighty machine which shall shortly move both heaven and earth, is coming forward. It is propelled by the hands and cheered by the voice of thousands. The prayers of God's people are more unanimous than they ever have been. They are concentrating, having one great petition to bear up before the throne of God,—even the salvation of a lost world.

But what are the most prominent causes which have produced these wonderful effects ?

Among the first, the noblest, and the most efficient, is a pure ministry, attended by its legitimate accompaniment, the Holy Spirit. In this particular we are more highly favored than were our fathers. A more flaming, heart-searching ministry has not existed since the days of the apostles, than the one which has been brought into operation the present age. *Laborers* have entered into the vineyard, not drones, nor idlers. Men who have forsaken all, and taken their lives in their hands—men who have dared to be singular—

bold and intrepid men, who have borne the burden and heat of the day. Frowns have not awed them, smiles have not allured them. They have preached with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. God has been with them, the mouths of gainsayers have been stopped, sinners have been converted, saints have rejoiced, and all the harps of heaven have been swept ! Some of these men have left the field, and entered into rest, and changed their garments rolled in dust and blood, and the helmet, and the sword, for the white robe, and the crown, and the palm of victory. Others have entered into their labors, and are warring a good warfare ; and many that have long buffeted the storm remain in the harness, and are wearing out in the service. God, by these his servants, is threshing the mountains, and subduing the haughty ones of the earth, and breaking down the strong holds of sin. He is preparing the way before them, and making glad the wilderness and the solitary place. Go on then, ye men of God ; prophesy not smooth things, but contend manfully for the truth, enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Verily, ye shall have your reward.

Another great cause of the present gracious spread of vital godliness in the world, is the united efforts of christians. Union is strength. When the christian church is united, the combined powers of earth and hell are insufficient to move it. Wicked men may rail, the iron hand of power may be stretched out against the Lord's anointed, and the tongue and the press may lift up their voices loud and strong to denounce her, and the uttermost parts of the earth coalesce to destroy

her beauty, and raze her even to the foundations thereof; still upon all her glory shall be a defence. A wall of brass the living God hath reared up about her, and he himself is the glory in the midst. And who, aye, who can molest or make afraid, while he who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, keepeth the gates of Jerusalem?

Among the most wonderful of the existing causes, are the Bible and missionary, and Sabbath school institutions; and the last, not least in the ranks, religious tracts and newspapers.

The spread of the Bible has been productive of great and lasting good. It has scattered the seeds of divine truth over portions of land which have not been accessible to the missionary. It has traversed the rudest and most uncultivated spots upon the earth. It is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Blessed Bible! pursue thy glorious path in the moral heavens. Go on enlightening the darkness of those who sit in the valley and shadow of death. May thy brightness be the day star of the tossed and the bewildered, till both hemispheres shall have felt at one and the same moment the influence of thy sacred beams, and thy hallowed light spread over all the earth. .

Sabbath schools, though lesser streams, all flow to the same point, and are more or less auxiliary in promoting the work of God. These begin with the young, the tender, the unsophisticated. They are, strictly speaking, the nurseries of the Lord; and those who

are engaged in leading little ones to Jesus on the Lord's own day, are highly privileged, are engaged in a great and good work. The Lord has prospered them greatly already, and he will continue to prosper them, yea, and more abundantly shall they be blessed. May our zeal in forwarding this important mean of religious instruction, be commensurate with the greatness of the call for labor, and the hopes of an abundant harvest which it gives.

The distribution of religious tracts has been justly considered as no small advancement to the cause of christianity. Great benefits have accrued to the community at large through this interesting medium of communicating solemn truths to the thousands who, without their means, might have perished in their sins. Many a drunkard has been arrested in his mad career through the interposition of these silent monitors, who, notwithstanding they have no audible voice, are made powerful reprovers by the mysterious influence of the Holy Spirit, in applying them to the hearts and consciences of men.

Religious newspapers next demand our attention, as not a whit behind some of the last mentioned causes, in coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. They are, in the judgment of christians, wonderfully calculated to infuse the spirit of inquiry and reading among the great mass of mankind. Here we have the features of the great work of God brought before our eyes in the faithful coloring of truth which cannot be controverted. The progress of the work is marked in every stage of its advancement, and the

triumphs of religion are announced with songs and rejoicings. The several parts of the wide field of missionary enterprise, with the men who labor in them, and their peculiar characters and success, are all made manifest to the eye and to the heart of every attentive reader. The amount of good which they have already done, cannot be estimated—it is known only to God.

RELIGION IS LOVE.

Religion is pure, and, like its author, lovely and loving. It never lessens our attachments to one another, chilling our affections, and drying up the springs of charity and sympathy and fine feeling, that feed the river of the milk of human kindness in the breast of man. The religion of Christ warms but never chills. The bosom where it resides feels an influence and imparts one too which angels would recognize as kindred to what they inhale in their own Eden. Who can love the misanthrope, the poor, curtailed animal, once man, but now less than the noble being who is stamped with divine features and born for social enjoyments.

When the great Christian Teacher was upon earth, his first lesson was love—a love of every thing good, and high, and noble, and extending itself over a world of intelligences. Its first manifestations at the throne of God, and its last, were for man. This is the lesson we

are to learn, if we would be taught by it. While we exercise this principle we cannot go astray. It is impossible. We shall stand in a broad place, covered by the panoply of Jehovah. And instead of becoming the slaves of superstition, or the tools of a party, we shall reverence the image of true religion, find it where we will, in the palace or the cottage, beaming from the face of the Indian, or shining on that of the African. Be the man of high or low degree, tugging at the oar, or galled by the hand of slavery, religion is the same in all. As she goes forth, clothed in the lovely regalia of her order, innumerable blessings attend her. The tears of the widow and the orphan are wiped away. Over the turmoil of life she spreads her hands, stilling the rude, rough surges of sorrow, and arching up the mourner's skies with the beautiful colors of peace, while around the world she scatters the bright ornaments of serenity and joy.

TO YOUTH.

There is no time so precious, so rich and promising, as the morning of our life, when flushed with health, and encouraged with bright prospects of future felicity, we begin to urge our way up the steep of existence. It is then our characters receive the stamp either of vice or virtue, honor or dishonor. And we may

depend upon it, that according to the manner in which we spend our youth will be our happiness and misery in after life. Early prejudices take deep root in the human heart, and the force of habit, confirmed before we arrive fully to years of maturity, is hard to throw off, even when our better judgment would direct us to make the sacrifice, and we are convinced that neglecting it will be the cause of our ruin. Youth is the spring season of our days ; it is then we should cultivate and improve our minds, or we shall be left, in maturer age, to lament our folly with bitter tears of sorrow and repentance, without the most distant prospect of ever making up for our immense loss. What is then left undone must remain undone forever. If we have wasted the morning of our days in riotous living and needless self-indulgence, without feeling the important and reasonable demands which God and society make upon rational intelligent beings, we must expect to reap the consequences of our indiscretions and prodigality. And is it not to be regretted, that these things, rendered so plain to the understandings of young people, and so often set before them, in a convincing and luminous manner, should be so generally neglected and despised, as though they were old wives' fables, not worthy of any notice, but to be treated with contempt and ridicule ? How many are led away into error, and imbibe false notions of things, thus weakening their energies, and blighting every bud of virtue in their souls, in consequence of having given a deaf ear to the wise sayings of the prudent, and the observing ? They would be independent and think for themselves, with-

out a knowledge of the ways of mankind, or the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and depending entirely upon their sagacity, are plunged into the very lowest sink of iniquity, covered with ignominy and shame. One departure from the strict rule of right, leads to another, and so on, ad infinitum. They may often promise themselves to do better, and even sometimes attempt a reform, but such, unfortunately, is the evil bent of our inclinations, when aided by a constant yielding to sin, that it takes more fortitude than human nature is commonly endowed with, to regain our true standing in the scale of moral rectitude. And yet, none are seemingly more unconscious of the dangerous tendency of evil propensities, when not properly guarded and brought under, than the youth himself—yet he appears, at times, to be somewhat aware of his exposure to danger, and makes some feeble efforts to escape ;—but, most generally, by not hitting the exact moment when resistance would have brought him off victorious, he falls an easy prey to his enemies, and is shorn of his strength, to become the sport of the rude and unprincipled. That there are some noble exceptions in this case, we readily acknowledge ; but still, we do contend, that the number is very few, in proportion to the many that are taken captive and brought into subjection to the vitiated habits of a refined age. These things ought not to be so. In a country like ours, they bear the most unfavorable appearances, and are sure presages of approaching ruin. The very foundation of our rights and liberties, were originally laid in the virtue, probity, industry, and perseverance of our fore-

fathers ; and wherever we turn our eyes, we behold the glorious monuments of their good faith and religious feeling raised and elevated by the spirit of a well directed providence. And it is only by following their footsteps, and emulating their example with the blessing of Almighty God, that we shall be able to preserve our nation alive and in good health ; while others, that have long rode triumphant upon the car of glory, may lie rotting and dismembered around us. But if our youth, forgetful of their high birth, and careless of the patrimony bequeathed to them by the illustrious Washington and his associates, throw away their time and their talents to the winds and to the waves, what shall become of the palladium of our liberty, when its present guardians have sunk beneath the weight of years, covered with glory, and bedewed with the tears of the good and brave. Where then shall we look for aid, but to our young men, and if they are found wanting in the great requisites necessary to form characters fit to give a proper tone to society, and take their stand in the high places of public trust and honorable competition—what can we expect but to see our country in mourning, and all her honors strewed in the dust. At present, we know there is but little to fear on this ground. Yet, notwithstanding, we conceive it to be our duty to be watchful and vigilant, lest being found off our guard, we may be taken by surprise, and lose, in an unhappy moment, what has been so dearly purchased by the blood of our best citizens. Let us, then, warn our young men of their danger, let us stir up their pure minds, by continually reminding them of their in-

valuable privileges, and the great work for which they are preparing. Let every mother hold up to her son the history of the great Washington ; that first, that best, that noblest of men. In a word, let every parent, and every guardian of youth, and every friend to the cause of religion and virtue, come up to the help of the Lord against the destroyers of the young and inexperienced, and wherever they see them given over to the tormentors, and consumed with ennui and dissipation, lift up their warning voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud and spare not.

THE DEATH OF FRIENDS.

There is, in the death of friends, an overwhelming sensation of sorrow, nameless, as it is oppressive and soul harrowing. While we hang over the languishing form of the beings we love, to whom we are knit by the fondest and most endearing ties, and administer to their wants, we are now and then visited by a gleam of hope, and our hearts are gladdened in the prospect of their recovery. But alas ! it is momentary, and like a glance of moonshine on the stormy seas, only makes us feel more keenly when we find ourselves disappointed. We hope and despair alternately, and in the thousand little offices that soothe the sick and the dying, reconcile ourselves in some degree to the

approaching scene, that, in an instant, and at a single stroke, cuts us off from every thing but submission. As the hour of separation draws near, we see the certain approach of the despoiler of our species in the glazed eye, the matted hair, the clammy forehead, and the clenched, busy hands, as if the soul was instinctively struggling to free itself from its earthly house. O, what gloomy forebodings are conjured up ! We feel the tug of nature at our heart strings. And as the pale ghost advances steadily to the outlet from which it ventures into unknown regions, we are drawn instinctively beyond the bounds of time ourselves. The convulsive shuddering, the heaving of the breast, the sepulchral voice, thickening and dying away in inarticulate sounds, the hoarse death rattle, give note that the last struggle has arrived which will speedily terminate the existence of a loved object, and throw a wide, unbounded sea between us. But who can paint the feelings of the soul when the kindred spirit, gasping, trembling on the verge of the unknown world, takes the fearful departure—when exhausted nature, drooping under the giant's hand, sinks down subdued, and expires. There is a crowded sensation about the heart, and we feel as if the same hand that has severed the brittle thread of life is feeling about our vitals, and wringing the warm drops of blood from our broken hearts ; and then the sunken eye, the stretched limbs, the hollow cheeks, proclaim in language not to be misunderstood, that all is over. What a cold, icy, lonely dejection falls upon the spirits ! The chamber where the grim monster strides over his prey is invested with

a torpid atmosphere, and we are, as it were, transported with the departed one, to the valley of the shadow of death. The world for a brief moment seems a blank, and all our joys, like flowers, withered by the rude, rough blast, droop and are no longer lovely to the senses. A dark cloud hangs over our destiny. Death's black eclipse has overshadowed us, and we brood over our sorrows and will not be comforted.

SPRING.

Lovely spring, we greet thee ! Thy brows are crowned with chaplets. Thou fillest all the air with music, such as angels love. The blustering winds soften into gentle gales. The silent brooks break out in brawling numbers, and the melifluous throats of feathered songsters wake the soul to holy musing. All nature feels the throb inspired by genial spring, and waking into life, hails, with one harmonious sound, the ethereal mildness of her glowing presence ! Soft showers descend like dew upon the top of Hermon, shedding their rich pearls on every herb and tree and opening flower ; and distilling life and health through all their interlacing roots. The monarch of the day, no longer dimmed with clouds of fleecy snow and chilling frosts, early opes the portals of the sky and marches forth in peerless majesty, pouring forth his bounteous streams of light over awakened

nature. The sweet south breathes upon the tufted hill, and sweeping gently o'er the leafy grove, catches the sweet odour of the budding shoot and spiry grass, and pours it fresh upon the ravished sense.

Pleasant the voice of spring to those, who, pent within their lowly hut, and pinched with cold and want, have counted, like the dungeoned prisoner, every day with care and longed to see the fairy footed harbingers of her coming. Yes, ye children of wretchedness, with joy ye see your native hills now softening into verdure, while the loosened stream, leaping from the craggy steep dances at your feet, and sparkling, rushes over its pebbly bed in pleasant murmurings. How gladly now ye press with buoyant step, the green enamelled turf, and urge your way with eager joy through thick entangled shrubberies and forests wide, to wield the axe, or dash your iron furrow in the yielding soil, or strew the bursting seed, or plant the strippling tree.

The merry music of the opening dawn now calls the peasant from his humble pallet, and cheers him with its softening harmony. Every living thing looks gay. The bounding deer rushes through the twining brake, and birds and beasts, from feathered nest and caverned den, come forth to hail reviving spring with notes of praise or uncouth gambols.

Happy spring! The time for man to plant, and sow, and toil, in full hope of a good reward when yellow autumn opens wide her bounteous hand, and pours her richest treasures at his feet. Air, earth and sky put forth their energies; all their stores are lavished on

his work. They wait upon him as his servants, satisfy his every want, and help him to lay up treasure for his future need.

And is not life the spring of our existence, the time to cultivate the mind, improve the understanding, better the heart? Then let us improve it with diligence and zeal, that when the Judge of all the earth surveys the works of high born spirits, we may deserve the welcome plaudit, Well done good and faithful servant,—and be ready to enter the Canaan of eternal blessedness,

“Where everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers.”

MAY.

The beauties of this lovely month are most delightful. There is a freshness and simplicity about them that creep like the soft sound of the Æolian harp over the sense, and charm and fascinate. They are like the new blown tints of the fair daughters of Eve, when they first begin to show the early promise of a riper age. May brings along with it a variety of pleasant and many gay associations. The suddenness with which it changes the wrinkled and hoary visage of winter into smiles and rosy dimples and all the flowery drapery of rainbow hues, is attractive. We cannot help feeling a deeper interest in the young summer than when she appears before us, fully matured, adorned with all the rich paraphernalia of the glowing year.

Every thing is new and fresh, and blooming. The voice of spring is now more mellowed than when first she sang a requiem to blustering winds and nipping frosts. The turbulent streams, softened by the genial smiles of May, roll smoothly over their pebbly beds, reflecting the pure cerulean sky with shining ripples. The gale comes scented with a richer perfume from the leafy grove, and by its chaste and virgin kisses, flushes every cheek with health and pleasure.

But ah ! how soon the rosy hours expire, and flowerets on their icy pillows sleep, and storms begin to rage and winds to blow and pleasure die ! Thus it is with man. In youth's fair prime he brightens on the stage of life and blooms awhile, but blooms not long. The cold, bleak storm of death comes rushing over his silvery locks, and scatters them with the seared leaf of autumn. He soon mingles with the dust—but another spring reanimates the fallen glory, and the hand of heaven transplants it to a flowery clime, to flourish in immortal beauty, unhurt by elemental wars and changing seasons.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.—MATT. xxiv. 14.

It has been preached in the world now for upwards of eighteen hundred years, and notwithstanding all the opposition that has been raised against it by the wicked

and unprincipled, it has hitherto triumphed over the combined efforts of its most malignant and powerful foes.

It has been preached in the world, and is now preached to the family of man, as a witness to them that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn and live.

It shall be preached in the world; and God himself shall witness to the truth of its pure doctrines and precepts, and that too in a wonderfully glorious and effective manner, by changing the whole face of society—and transforming every uncultivated spot upon the footstool into fruitful gardens.

It shall be preached, and become a witness to a world of unbelievers, that they may be convinced that he who raised this splendid fabric, by the word of his mouth, is able to spread the knowledge of his saving love from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and that what he has spoken shall most assuredly come to pass.

It shall be preached for a witness to all nations—none are excluded in the universal commission given to all true ministers of this Gospel of the kingdom. It matters not how remote, or dark, stupid or immoral they may have been. Though spell bound by heathenish or Mahometan delusion—conscience bound by superstition, priestcraft or bigotry, they shall hear this Gospel of the kingdom, and every spell shall be broken—every chain and fetter burst from every mind, till the inhabitants of the whole earth are subjugated to the mild sceptre of Immanuel.

Thus will the Gospel of the kingdom, like a sacred talisman, touch the nations of the earth ; and institutions, venerable by reason of their antiquity shall perish like the spider's web, and universal joy and gladness fill the world.

MATERNITY.

Lo ! at the couch where infant beauty sleeps,
 Her silent watch the mournful mother keeps ;
 She, while the lovely babe unconscious lies,
 Smiles on her slumbering child with pensive eyes,
 And weaves a song of melancholy joy.

Pleasures of Hope.

The softest, sweetest, the most delicate and touching feature in the domestic circle, is where maternal solicitude discovers itself in the thousand nameless little attentions towards lovely innocence. The pencil of Raphael would be inadequate to the task of delineating the expressive, the soul thrilling gaze of her whose throbbing breast beats affection to the precious little one, lent her from the skies. The opening charms of spring in its livery of green, and harmony of inspiring sounds from unfettered brooks, and newly peopled woods and groves, may be considered as affording true pictures of the unfolding beauties of infant loveliness, and the pleasing train of buoyant thoughts that are imaged up by the fond mother, while fancying herself already repaid for all her cares, and tears, and anxie-

ties. These moments are the most delicious of her existence—moments of bliss on which she feasts with mingled sensations of pain and pleasure. It is not a paroxysm of joy in which she revels. Her feelings, it is true, are awake, and every pulsation of her soul trembles like leaves when kissed by whispering breezes. But we speak of feelings we are incapable of comprehending—feelings attuned only to the fairest and loveliest of God's works, and felt only by them, to which man must, at least in part, ever remain a stranger.

THE BURIED ALIVE.

It was the still hour of night, and over the dark blue heavens the starry worlds were twinkling. Nature's bosom, serene and tranquil, reflected a beautiful variety of dimly discovered objects to the eye. Nought was heard in that lone hour save the gentle rustling of the leaves of a gloomy cypress tree, whose umbrageous branches flung their black shadows amongst the cold monuments of the sleeping dead. The silvery light of the pale moonshine lay in long lines here and there over the stones and mounds of earth that surrounded me, and in large patches slept along a gentle declivity that rose a little beyond the narrow houses of the departed ones. I advanced slowly, inspired with the most profound awe and reverence : but was suddenly interrupted by a dreadful groan as of one strug-

gling and suffocating, and tugging for life. My blood ran cold through my veins while a convulsive shivering crept over me.—I had been imperceptibly led by the mildness of the evening far beyond my usual walk, and became bewildered in my return, and, without knowing where I was, had wandered on and on till I happened to spy what first appeared to me like a garden, through which I ventured in hopes to find a house—and behold I was treading on the ashes of my fellow beings. I now paused, undetermined what to do. The night was far advanced—which way to flee I knew not. Supernatural terrors had never affected me before. Indeed I used to pride myself upon my strength of nerve, and often smiled at the imaginary fears of others. But the stifled groan that had met my ear paralyzed all my faculties and quite unmanned me. I had not time to recover myself when another and another groan, uttered in an undefinable and unearthly manner, rose up out of the ground near me, and fell heavily on my heart.—What my sensations were in that dread hour, I know not. I have only an indistinct and feeble recollection of what passed. All my limbs grew stiff and cold, and I felt as though I were turned into a living statue. Pale and motionless I stood. My eye balls glaring wildly and my teeth chattering. Yet my brain seemed on fire and my clenched hands were stretched out as though I would have relieved. I recollect I tried to bend myself forward, and shrieked and then my throat grew dry, and then a groan would come up from the imprisoned and dense earth, and die away upon the chilled and dewy air, and again an awful still-

ness would reign around. At last nature as if aroused from a stupor into which fear had evidently thrown her, lent me new strength, and with a desperate effort I plunged forward on the place from whence I imagined the sounds proceeded, and falling prostrate upon a new made grave fainted away. The grey morning was just peeping out over the eastern hills when I came to my recollection. The grave on which I had fallen was fresh. Not a tuft of grass had grown upon it, though spring was now far advanced. Indeed it was very evident, that it had but recently received its tenant. The approach of day banishing my fears, I endeavoured to shake off my foolish apprehensions, and without delay assembled the few cottagers that I could find at that early hour, with the sexton, whose cottage lay only at a little distance. As I had no doubt that some unfortunate being had been prematurely hurried into the tomb before life had been wholly extinguished, we set about digging up the new made grave, and, shocking to relate, on removing the lid of the coffin, which was already somewhat wrenched from its flimsy fastening, we found a man nearly turned over on his side, his face frightfully distorted and almost blood warm. From every thing we could gather, he had been literally buried alive. A solemn warning to all against premature interments.

JACOB.

Alone, wrapt in the visions of sleep, exposed to the dews of midnight, rested the houseless patriarch. The

cold earth was his bed ; the stones were his pillow ; but his sleep was sweet, and his intercourse with God and holy angels delightful. The dread of his brother's vengeance was forgotten in the gracious assurance given him of almighty aid and divine protection: The morning dawns upon his rugged bed ; the vapors of sleep are dissipated ; the pleasing spell broken, and he awakes. With silent astonishment, he gazes around him, looks in vain for the bright assemblage of angelic spirits, and him who appeared as standing upon the verge of the better world above them all. He listens with the most intense interest to catch the thrilling, heart-cheering sounds that had broken upon his ear in the sweet oblivion of sleep. But no voice, no sound, interrupt the stillness of the scene. While pondering on the mysterious vision, a solemn grandeur seems to invest the spot on which he had slept. The very air breathes of heaven. He bows—he adores—and taking the stone he had for his pillow, he sets it up for a pillar, and pouring oil upon it, cries out, filled with the most sublime conceptions of the divine majesty,—and this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house.

SAINT PAUL.

While examining the pages of history, and looking through the postern of time long elapsed, our attention is very often arrested, and our feelings excited, by the

wild grandeur in which the heroes of antiquity are invested. The partiality of the historians of those days of chivalrous deeds, the romance and high wrought enthusiasm of the times, and the lofty perceptions of their poets, have contributed, in no small degree, to cause that magic influence which is almost universally felt by mankind, while contemplating the master spirits of other days. But where do we find such a soul moving in the breasts of their most renowned warriors and statesmen, as may be seen stirring in that of the great apostle of the Gentiles—point us out the spirit among them all, who, though fettered and imprisoned, yet maintained a noble contest with principalities and powers, and with spiritual wickedness in high places. His intrepid soul no chains could bind, no threatenings shake ; he was alike regardless of sufferings, and unmoved by the flatteries or applause of men.—Other great men move forward with the tide ; the wave of glory buoys them up ; the breezes of prosperity waft them along ; nature herself aids them in their bold undertakings ; both the Indies pour treasures at their feet, and hosts of armed bands succeed and back their most ambitious projects. But in Paul we see a man pushing against wind and tide, buffetting the rude, rough surges of a thousand adverse seas, smiling at impossibilities, trampling upon opposition, poor and penniless, forsaken, distressed, insulted, and degraded,—yet contending with a world of foes, and maintaining his ground even in the very heart and centre of the dominions of the prince of darkness. In a word, the case of Saul of Tarsus, once the bold persecutor

of christianity, afterwards its most zealous and successful champion, is without a parallel in the history of man.

THE CONTRAST.

A death bed scene is contemplated by most men with horror, when it is darkened by the agonies of a human being who feels in his last moments the lashes of a guilty conscience, and expires under the just displeasure of God. Truly, nothing can be realized on these eventful shores, of a more fearful and heart-rending description, than the last hours of one borne down with the heavy pressure of disease—the past rising like a spectre before him, and the future with terrible realities manifest before his eyes. He shudders over the deep abyss of the eternal world, already full of unutterable imaginings.—He is one who had been blessed with time, opportunity, and with numerous religious privileges,—now about to lose them forever; nigh unto death and wholly unprepared to meet his God. Such are chased out of the world by the fiends that have long held possession of their hearts. They are driven away by the rod of vengeance that they had long despised—taken in the snares of their own devices, in the very retreats they had covered with the curtains, of pleasure and beauty.

The life of a wicked man is often a life of gaiety, thoughtlessness and presumption; but his death is an

awful scene of horror and misery. No light from heaven irradiates his dying bed. It is all thick darkness ; the past, the present, the future—all, all, above, beneath and around him, is obscured by an impenetrable mist.

“ What horrors seize the guilty soul
 Upon a dying bed !——
 Linger about these mortal shores,
 She makes a long delay,
 ’Till, like a flood with rapid force,
 Death sweeps the wretch away !”

But oh, what a different scene opens to our view in the death of the truly pious ! To them the monster is no unwelcome visiter : they tremble not before him. They can cry out in holy triumph, O death, where is thy sting ; O grave, where is thy victory ! Their sins trouble them not—they are buried in forgetfulness, to be remembered no more against them forever. Their skies are clear ; for the sun of righteousness hath dissipated every cloud, and beams forth joy and gladness upon their souls. The atmosphere is pure and pleasant ; for angel bands fill the ambient air, and the sweet breezes of paradise already fan their sinking spirits. The prospect before them is transcendently glorious ; faith expands their vision, and hope beautifies the surrounding scenery, and love stands at the very gates of the celestial city, ready to usher the ransomed prisoner into its mansion of blessedness. Here are no indications of a soul in despair, racked with the throes and sufferings of perdition anticipated and begun. Not that the righteous all experience an uninterrupted peace, and bask in the clear sunshine of assurance in their last

struggles with death. Few, however, there are, who cannot say, in the hour of agony,—I know in whom I have believed. For me, to live is Christ—to die is gain.

“Jesus can make a dying bed
 Feel soft as downy pillows are,
 While on his breast I lean my head,
 And breathe my life out sweetly there.”

DEATH.

—“Tell me, frightened nature, what is death?
 Blood only stopped, and interrupted breath,
 The utmost limit of a narrow span,
 And end of motion which with life began?”

No strength of constitution can withstand the stroke of death. Men may boast of their robust form, their muscular force, and continued good health; but all these must yield to this agent of eternity. Those who have stemmed the rushing torrent, breasted the raving elements, and boldly ventured out on the boisterous deep, strangers to fear, firm and collected in the hour of danger, and in the day of battle,—even these, become an easy prey and fall prostrate and powerless under the hand of death. When he aims the blow, the physician’s skill—his drugs and restoratives are of no avail. They lose their healing influence and refuse their wonted support to the springs of life. All earthly connexions are dissolved by his blighting touch. His

summons arrests the aspirations of youth and beauty, of ambition and fame. The ascendant star of glory falls like lightning before his desolating look. Reckless of a nation's hopes, he blasts them in an hour, and sports with princes as bubbles on the eddying tide. He knows no remorse nor pity, but presses on in his soul harrowing work, unmoved by the beautiful and noble ruins which are daily falling around his path. See the dark form of the monster lowering over his victim. His icy fingers chill life's warm current; the attenuated thread is broken—the smiles of connubial joy have vanished—the sunshine of friendship has passed away—the dearest ties that bind man to earth are sundered. Though we loved as Jonathan and David, yet will death ere long shroud the object of our affections in the dark tomb, and wrest the blessings of life from our embrace.

TIME.

“Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,
Unsoil'd, and swift.”——

The beauties of nature, the wonders of creation, the mysteries of providence, are not closed from observation. They manifest themselves in a variety of ways and become visible to the eye, and the ear, and the heart. Subjects, the most profound, and seemingly beyond the reach of thought, rise up before us suddenly and unexpectedly. Nature is seen bursting through a

thousand channels ; providence fills the world with her ministers ; heaven and earth are filled with signals of operation visible to the senses ; but the movements of time are covered with obscurity. Silent and unseen in its progress, it steals along, noiseless as the foot-fall of fabled sprite, or disembodied ones. As it journeys to eternity, the flowers of spring wither, the beauty of summer fades, the richness of autumn passes away. Its effacing fingers imperceptibly tarnish the cheek of loveliness, and trace deep furrows on the brow of care. Although unseen in its flight, yet it never ceases to bear us forward on its silken wing.

“ Whate’er we do by night or day,
We’re travelling to the grave.”

We shall soon find ourselves plunged into unknown regions, where the history of our unprofitable lives have gone before us to darken or beautify that other world.

HAPPINESS.

True happiness results from the action of a well governed mind, under the influence of religious principles. It is a rare attainment, and one which but seldom prevails in the human breast for any considerable length of time, without being ruffled by the elements of passion or feeling, which frequently disturb the most peaceful and happy. There is nothing that presents

itself so often to the mind, and appears with such a winning aspect, as what men generally term happiness; yet nothing can be more fleeting or deceptive.

“ We grasp the phantom, and we find it air.”

Happiness is the first and the most beautiful object that attracts us in the outset of life, and there are none who do not promise themselves to enjoy it in all its fulness, at some time or other before they die. Its image is constantly flitting before our eyes in its most fascinating array, with inviting smiles, and beckoning us to draw near and realize all our bright imaginings. Attracted by its loveliness, we wait for no calculations; we rush forward with precipitancy, and pursue the phantom through the mazy dance of pleasure, and already fancy ourselves revelling in full possession of its boasted charms, till cruel disappointment crosses our path and every thing around us becomes more dreary than before.—Something like happiness is enjoyed by the youthful tyro, whose aspiring soul dilates with ambitious longings; he who treads on air and rears his proud castles high in clouds, and supposes that fortune’s smiles are permanent, soon falls back to earth again. The baseless fabric of his visionary hours vanishes into airy nothing, and he is doomed by disappointment to plod his pilgrim way alone through time’s dreary waste. There is, too, in the first entrance on the stage of busy life in the society of those to whom we have plighted the vows of earthly love, a sweet satisfaction, nearly amounting to happiness. The soul flutters around these new and enchanting scenes. The tender

endearments of connubial joy that cluster before the family hearth, attract ; and, for a brief space, at least, we pause, admiring the novelty and fitness of such a life to quiet the elements that have raved within. Here, says the weary one, I shall find rest. The proud waves of anxious expectancy, the tumultuous throbblings of desire are here stayed. I have now found a home, and like the dove would stay in this ark, no more to wander to and fro over all the earth, seeking for ease and quiet. But ere long the horizon is darkened, the clouds gather, the tempests blow, and we are amazed. Amazed, indeed ! what is there here beneath the circle of the sun which heaven has fashioned like the soul ! Or where does it find its centre, there to remain and be at rest forever ? Is not its mate a being of to-day, whose mightiest boastings are like air, whose standing is shaken in a moment, and whose fortunes all seem gathered within a narrow space, or play around a single point of time ! Can earth, or sky, or vast creation bound the stretch of thought, or fill the mighty void ? No verily :

“ There’s nothing here deserves our joys,
There’s nothing like our God.”

In him alone true happiness is to be found. He hath so ordained it, that nothing but himself can stay the aberrations of the mind, and fix the soul permanently.—God is the true centre of all happiness and enjoyment. When we arrive within the influence of his attracting love, we breathe an air, pure, untroubled and serene. We move no longer at random ; but by

the immutable law of love, sweetly revolve around our Father and our God, feeling full upon our souls the refracted rays of his benevolence, truth and mercy. It is God who lifts us up above the world, sets our feet upon a rock, establishes our goings, and puts a new song into our mouth. We reach by faith the suburbs of the heavenly world, and scale the mount of bliss. Are we seeking happiness from impure motives, under unhallowed influences, directed by base principles? We have no lot nor part in the matter. Let us rather raise our thoughts to heaven and fix our eyes on him who is invisible. Let us seek the friendship of the great God, he who has condescended to call himself our Father and our friend, and by our lives and conversation, show that we have indeed been with Jesus. Then we shall feel and know a happiness complete and lasting which shall never be taken away from us; but which will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

ADAMS AND JEFFERSON.

It was the nation's Jubilee.—On that day, fifty years before, America had declared herself free and independent. Her shackles fell off, and disenthralled and emancipated, she arose and took her station among the nations of the earth. The morning of the jubilee was ushered in with the thunder of cannon and the shouts

of freemen. Three venerable men, remnants of the patriotic heroes who signed the Declaration of our Independence, hailed that auspicious morning with joy. But oh, with what exalted feelings must they have been inspired! Their cup was full—it was running over. They were amid the crowded cities and smiling hamlets of a new world—in the midst of the third and fourth generations of a people with whose sires they had been familiar. There they stood, bearing about them the honorable marks of long service, bowed down with years, and withered, and frosted, by the hand of time; commanding respect even from their enemies, and calling forth the admiration of the new race of men who looked up to them as travellers gaze upon stupendous monuments of departed days.

Two of them have left us. Their strange and sudden departure, at a time the most remarkable in the annals of our history, is not to be forgotten. They have left us to sorrow because they are not; but, thanks be to God, they have not left us alone! The ascending patriarchs have dropped their mantles. They rest upon many of our countrymen. The same spirit that inspired them—that moved their compatriots—that roused our beloved Washington to deeds which will ever render his name and his memory dear to the brave and the good, still glows in the breasts of our citizens.

The Almighty has always appeared to manifest a special interest for our nation. He watched over it in its infancy, conducted it through every stage of its eventful struggle with Great Britain, and brought it

forth from the conflict triumphant. We may now contemplate a phenomenon of providence which will be gazed at by the enlightened of every quarter of the globe. In permitting these sages to depart at such an eventful moment, another wonder is added to our country's history—one more imperishable line, God himself hath added, that can never be erased.

PROFANATION OF THE SABBATH.

In whatever light we view the Sabbath, whether with regard to its origin, influence, or effects upon society, we must ever consider it as one of the greatest benefits conferred upon mankind—as an institution from which we derive the greatest personal, social, and national advantages; and which has evidently raised us in point of true greatness, far above those nations, either entirely ignorant of it, or doubtful of its divine appointment. And we may add, that in proportion to our reverence of the day, (let others call it superstition, if they will,) are temporal as well as spiritual blessings bestowed upon us. Where the holy Sabbath is disregarded, and the duties connected with it neglected, there the curses of God fall heavily—there are mildew and blasting, pestilence and death. These are facts, that require but little sagacity to comprehend, and are confirmed by daily observation and experience.

What kind of apology, then, can we make for ourselves—we, who have been, or are now guilty of violating the Sabbaths of the Lord, either by precept or example? How shall we answer for our sacrilegious conduct, in thus robbing God of that which is his own, sanctified and hallowed by him for the most important and sacred purposes? Do we regard our own personal interests? If we did, we should not only be punctual in our attendance upon the worship of God, on his own appointed day, to render him due homage in his courts; but we should also carefully abstain from every thing on that day which could in any measure offend so holy a being, bringing down misery and ruin on our own heads and those of others.

Do we regard the spiritual, the eternal welfare of our families? It is to be feared that we regard other matters with deeper interest, while the concerns of a future, interminable state of existence, which will be happy or miserable, according to the improvement we now make of our religious privileges, are considered light, in comparison to what the world calls great and honorable.

We make the Sabbath, very frequently, subservient to our pleasures—a day of feasting and amusement; so that instead of being rendered a blessing to us, it brings a curse upon us, and infamy and disgrace upon our children.

Are we lovers of our country—true to it in weal or woe? No, verily—we are base traitors to its dearest interests, deserving of shame and reproach, if we are found breaking the Sabbaths of the Lord, or accessory

in any degree, in leading others to do the same. Can it be denied, that a vast proportion of our fellow citizens, pay as little regard to the Sabbath as the untutored savage, and hail its return only because it seems to favor their habits of indolence, affording them a favorable opportunity of gratifying their depraved appetite for self-indulgence? It is to be deplored, and we say it with shame and with confusion of face, that in keeping holy the Sabbath day, the children of the pilgrims have fallen off, very much indeed, from the glorious example of their fathers. We talk, and write, and preach much about the growing prosperity of our country, and the wonderful effects produced by the various religious institutions, and publications without number, that have for their professed object the moral improvement and general good of the millions which compose our rising republic; but are not fully aware of the great drawback to all these well aimed efforts, in the actual existence and baneful effects of Sabbath-breaking—an evil, which we believe, has scarcely an equal in the catalogue of abominations now abroad in the land, and is bringing in its train the most ruinous consequences. It may be termed, with much propriety, the parent of every vice that disgraces human nature.—Intemperance, infamy, murder, suicide, are its offspring. They are the natural consequents of this God-dishonoring, soul-destroying iniquity. Would we avoid this wasting pestilence, that has already made desolate many a moral garden, that once flourished in all the beauty and freshness of the first Eden, we must, with one vigorous blow, strike at the root of this enor-

mous sin, that the branches which grow out of it may fall, wither, and decay ; and then, all those who find shelter under its deadly shade, will be forced to flee.

However, this work of purification in the moral world can never be accomplished thoroughly unless the most strenuous exertions are made, not by a few humble individuals merely, but by the great body of the christian community.

Much as we should deprecate any infringement upon the liberty of conscience, which prevails to a very great extent in these United States, and is their glory and boast ; we cannot but think, that the Sabbaths of the Lord, which are acknowledged even by enemies, to have always had the most benign and salutary influences upon society, should be held sacred by our countrymen ; and where their efforts to preserve its purity are unavailing, and they behold the Sabbath-breaker continuing his course, unmoved by the warnings and expostulations of his friends, trampling, without remorse, upon all law, human and divine,—it is then high time that something more effectual should be done to guard this sacred institution.

There have been ways and means, well devised by the authorities of the land, in order to check the high-handed and lawless conduct of such men, lost as they generally are, to every thing that exalts and dignifies the human character. We are defective, not so much in principle, perhaps, as in energy and perseverance. Let us awake from our slumbers, and by a virtuous and religious course of manly conduct, show ourselves on the Lord's side. Every American citizen is deeply

interested in this matter. The happiness, the well being of society, of our children,—in short, our all depends in a great measure, upon the tone of moral feeling that is kept up and preserved in the community at large. Without it, we could but rank with the aborigines of our country, and indeed, I know not, but we should have to take a much lower place, and herd with brutes. And shall we tamely yield to the destroyer, and behold without a struggle the ruin which it hath already brought upon us and ours? Can we look upon the broken down and defaced intellectual temples, which lie in the dust before our eyes, and not reflect upon what they might have been, had they by a timely, prompt and judicious interference, been preserved from falling so low.

While vast plans are in hopeful operation to disseminate christianity throughout America, and we are sending the bread of life to the perishing in foreign lands, let us not be forgetful, ourselves, to keep holy the Sabbath day. Let us at home, around our firesides, in the social circle, and to the world, announce publicly, and without wavering, our resolution to hallow and reverence it as long as we tabernacle on earth. This will have some effect. It will have a noble effect, and perhaps in time, if we continue faithful, it will work a universal reformation in our highly favored land. May the day soon arrive, when there shall be nothing to annoy or to make afraid, in all God's holy mountain.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

There never was a more auspicious era than the present for the religious, moral and intellectual improvement of the human mind. A vast portion of the ignorance, error and superstition that had for ages maintained a control over mankind has been eradicated by a course of operation long thought incompetent to the undertaking. In accomplishing what has been done for the melioration of society, Sabbath Schools have borne an honorable and efficient place. When they were first brought into operation, as is generally the case with new and untried projects, they were condemned, and for a length of time, doomed to oblivion; until the salutary effects produced in the very few and remote places where they had been established became public, and caught the eye of some eminent individuals. From that moment Sabbath Schools gradually advanced in favor with the good and great, and have continued to the present day performing wonders in the rising generation.

The beneficial effects of Sabbath Schools are not so glaring, nor so easily demonstrated to superficial observers as those of other institutions; but they are no less permanent and conducive to the best interests of society. They have been tried in the balances of the sanctuary, and have not been found wanting. They have been well tested and their sterling value has not depreciated. And although they have passed through many a severe ordeal, there have been found men who have espoused their cause and never wavered

from their honorable purpose until they had the satisfaction of beholding the enemies of Sabbath Schools yielding themselves up to the firm conviction of their great utility in reforming the manners of youth, and giving them proper notions of the respect due to the Lord's day, and to his revealed word.

But notwithstanding the good they have already been the means of doing, and the extensive credit they have obtained among the enlightened, the philanthropic, and the religious of almost every denomination, much more may be done, much more ought to be done, that a due proportion of energy may be transfused throughout our country—an energy that will bear more immediately upon meliorating the condition of the thousands of untutored children that crowd our towns and cities, and are wholly regardless of the Sabbath day.

INDEPENDENCE.

There is a spurious kind of independence abroad in the world which passes with many for genuine. But it is as far from true independence as rudeness is from politeness. There are those who feel puffed up with pride, and are continually boasting of their independence, and really imagine themselves in possession of this high-born quality, when they have no lot nor part

in the matter. That which they call independence deserves not the name. It has no affinity to it. If they feel stubborn and unyielding, why, forsooth, it is independence ; and if they are dogmatical and perverse, notional or rude, all these base born feelings constitute, in their estimation, an independent spirit.

True independence is congenial to virtue and religion. It is not a proud, overbearing, tyrannical gust of low passion, fostered by an unmeaning, affected pride. It takes its rise in that knowledge of ourselves and of our own attainments which comports with true dignity. It is immoveable in principle, but yielding in appearance, —and is an exalted attribute of the human character. Like the oak, the monarch of the forest, when around the storms and whirlwinds play, it bends majestically to their contending fury, but rises again stately and unbroken.

WOMAN.

Man is a social being. He was formed for society. The divine similitude in which he was fashioned has given him powerful attractions, and made him capable of enjoying a large proportion of felicity. He was never created to move within himself, and to form the centre and the circle of a selfish sphere, narrowed and circumscribed by a lonely and cold hearted destiny. God saw, when he formed man, that it was not good

for him to be alone, and he provided him a partner suited to his dignity, to enhance his enjoyments, and exercise the flowing affections of his manly soul. Woman was the being heaven moulded for this benevolent purpose.—Fairer than the virgin rose, and beautiful as an angel of light, she came forth from the hands of the divine architect, and burst, with a glorious brightness, upon the ravished vision of the first man.

Woman in her high estate, and bearing about her the softness and mildness and charming naivete so truly characteristic of her lovely nature, is the most beautiful and the most desirable of God's gifts. It is woman that first teaches man to love, and inspires him with the noblest sentiments of religion and virtue. Where she follows the order of providence and moves in her own pure orbit, the lustre that surrounds her is bright with holy radiance, and the air she breathes, sacred and hallowed as the breath of heaven. Her society promotes virtuous feelings, is the best antidote to the ills of life, and the sweetest solace to man under the depressive influence of disappointed hope. Where it is sought with pure motives and appreciated and honored by man, the rough edges of his character are imperceptibly worn away in her company. She gives new and enchanting colorings to his prospects, greater strength to his attachments, and more sublime and beautiful imaginings to his stern nature. The woman who inflexibly sustains her rank in society, is a blessing wherever she resides. She is, in herself, a host. No tongue can defame her, no sacrilegious hand destroy her. She moves securely within the panoply of her

virtues, dispensing light and peace and joy to thousands. O, it is delightful to contemplate this fair and beautiful creature, blending the enchanting characters of wife and mother in one untiring and ever anxious desire to please.

ALL IS VANITY.

Vanity is written on all earthly things. It is inscribed in large and legible characters on the seeming realities of life, and the dazzling glories of the world serve only to give out the motto with greater truth and certainty, as the lightning's vivid glare in the awful hour of midnight renders horrible the darkness with which we are enveloped and the danger to which we are exposed. The fashion of the world is subject to continual change, and its beauty decays like the autumnal leaves. How vain and unsatisfactory are those idols of the heart around which our fond fancies had entwined themselves. And in our waking dreams, oh, what a perpetuity of blissful hours seemed to await us in the distant vista of life. Joy behind joy in endless perspective. For a while, at least, we may realize the pleasing vision. But we soon awake from our slumbers; the delirium into which we had been thrown by the fascinations of time and sense leaves us, and a new train of reflections take the place of those enthusiastic notions which had been leading us to destruction and to the grave. In truth, the clouds, that are

chased over the face of the heavens by winds and storms, are not more evanescent than the fortunes of men. The spider's most attenuated thread is cord, is cable to the ties that bind us to this deceitful clime. The froth of the ocean is not more light and trifling than the empty things which are continually demanding so much of our care and attention ; nor are veering winds more changeable than the smiles, and frowns, and plaudits of our fellow-worms. All is vanity here below, ever promising but never performing. In what a poor cheating world we dwell. We look abroad in the morning of our days and greet the fair surface of a thousand joys ; dazzled with the many glittering objects that invite our ardent gaze, we believe them all fair as beautiful, and lasting as fair ! At the most distant idea of deception we spurn. We cannot imagine that such loveliness should ever wither, until the hurried hand of time strips them of their borrowed charms, and applying her dripping sponge washes away the paint with which they had been beautified. Then, and not till then, do we discover the imposture. The haggard visage of despair frowns upon us, and we find our most brilliant expectations have failed, leaving us poor and penniless, the sport of winds and of waves.

THE FUTURE.

It is covered with darkness. Uncertainty hovereth around it. No mortal ken reacheth beyond the present

now. We may dream about it, and fancy we see it before our eyes, and live in the midst of it by anticipation—but after all our fancyings, it is not. An inexplicable cloud hangs over it, and shuts it out from the prying eyes of mortals. We see not the bare and rugged paths over which our feet are destined to travel. The torture by which our finest feelings may yet be tried, we feel not. The shock of parting spirits, and the almost insufferable pangs of widowed loneliness we cannot realize. The ills of life which flesh is heir to, are so distant from our view, we think nought about them ;—but press along in our journeyings through this unfriendly clime, plucking the roses as they bloom. And although our fellow travellers are daily suffering before our eyes, to warn us of what we ourselves must sooner or later endure ; still we go forward without thought, unprovided for the future, and putting off from day to day the great preparation necessary for the hour of trial.

O how thoughtlessly we live ! How careless to provide for the future ! How little we estimate our *time* ! That precious jewel, which if weighed and valued with attention, would be found inestimable—beyond price ! “ more precious than silver or gold, or all that this earth can afford.” What we have left undone, must remain undone forever. The future will never fill up the chasm we have made in our past lives. We cannot recall the past, neither can we blot it from our memory. It will remain there through all future time to disturb us with its baleful presence.

The future, although not seen, is at hand. It comes to weigh our conduct in the balances of truth. Its voice will be like thunder. Its charges weighty and just. It is fraught with the rich harvest of our past and present industry, or with the briars and thorns and pains and sorrows, the natural consequences of our shameful neglect and sinful sluggishness. It comes to scatter our plumes in the dust, and to cover us with clouds and darkness ; or to light up our souls with the rainbow of joy and hope. Would we look at the future with composure, let us improve the *present*. Do we tremble at what may befall us ere we lay our heads in the dust ? Let us remember that religion can support us under all our trials here below. Is there a fearful foreboding and uncertainty resting over our minds concerning an hereafter ? Thanks be to God, even in this we may be confident, that he who applies his heart unto wisdom, and lives in constant preparation for his last and great change, shall be covered with the pavilion of God's love.

JESUS CHRIST.

Great is the mystery of godliness—God manifested in the flesh. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Mysterious connexion ! He who was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person,—by whom also the worlds were made.

The alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of all things, submitted to be clothed in humanity ; for he did not take upon him the form of an angel, nor of a super-angelic spirit ; but hear it, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, he became man—he veiled himself in our fallen nature, was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ! He was despised and we esteemed him not, but we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed.

He who dwelt in the palace of the skies, attended and worshipped by myriads of bright spirits, deigned to become a poor, forlorn, deserted stranger in a world of woes. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests ; but the Son of God had nowhere to lay his head.

Jesus Christ was justified in the spirit. The patriarchs, holy men and prophets saw his day afar off and were glad. They rejoiced at the approaching advent of the Messiah, and believed in his name. A special messenger was sent before him, who testified of a mightier prophet than he, whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose. . I have baptized, said he, with water,—but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. He announced him to be the Son of God with power. At his baptism, the Spirit descended upon him in bodily shape like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared,—thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. At his transfiguration upon the mount, while

he yet spake, a bright cloud overshadowed him, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him. There were miraculous appearances at his death. There was darkness at noon day which continued till the ninth hour. The veil of the temple was rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves were opened, many bodies of the saints which slept arose, came out of the graves, went into the holy city and appeared unto many. The centurion who stood over against him, smote his breast, saying, truly this man was the Son of God.

“ Can love allure us or can terror awe ?

He weeps ! the falling drops put out the sun—

He sighs ! the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes.”

Jesus Christ was seen of angels. They beheld him in his low estate and ministered unto him. The celestial ones, who sang together, when they saw creation rise up fair and beautiful at their author's mandate, struck their golden lyres to sweeter and softer strains when they beheld the star of Bethlehem, dawning upon the confines of creation. Then seraphic music filled the air. And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying—Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to man. In the wilderness after forty days of severe temptation and fasting, an angel ministered unto him. In his agony in the garden he was strengthened by an angel. At the sepulchre, the touch of a radiant inhabitant of glory rolled away the

huge stone that sealed its entrance. Behold there was a great earthquake—for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was as white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. At his ascension, while his disciples looked steadily towards heaven, behold two shining ones stood by them in white apparel.

Jesus Christ was preached unto the Gentiles. At his death, the way was opened for a universal display of the divine glory. The Mosaic economy, with its appurtenances, being the mere shadows of a more glorious manifestation vanished away—and now all the dwellers upon earth are invited to participate in the general jubilee. At first, there were but twelve poor fishermen, men selected from the lowest of the people, ignorant and unlearned to raise the standard of the despised teacher. But soon numbers flocked around it. Jerusalem ceased to be the only rallying point, and the whole civilized earth owned its sway.

“ See how great a flame aspires
Kindled by a spark of love.”

Thus saith the Lord God, behold I will lift up my hands to the Gentiles, and my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and their daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders, and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

Jesus Christ was received up into glory before hundreds of his disciples, who were eye witnesses to the fact. For he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

“——suddenly a star arose ;
It was the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all ;
It bade my dark forebodings cease ;
And through the storm and danger's thrall
It led me to the port of peace.”

H. K. White.

Our state in this vale of tears is a mixed one. Life may be likened to the winds, ever shifting. Sometimes it appears as calm as summer evenings are, and again, storms and tempests chequer its even surface, darkening every prospect and rendering scenes, once bright and joyous, gloomy and bleak as the plains of desolation. But even over all these scenes there is one star seen to brighten. In the absence of all that renders life tolerable, in weal or wo, in joy or sorrow, it still beams out unchanged and undimmed. It shines in peerless beauty, dispensing its blessed light at all seasons, and even when it is forgotten, and we steer wide of its heavenly direction, still it seems to twinkle near us. This is the star of Bethlehem. It goes be-

fore us, shooting downward its golden brightness, and then again it plays like a thing of life athwart the distant vista, that had, for a brief moment, shut in, black and dark as midnight. O what heart rending sensations pervade the torn, lacerated bosom of the afflicted, when they see the gigantic shadings of life's fitful picture cover for days this pole star of their hopes! Dark, dark, are all present things, though arrayed in the pomp and glitter of this world's splendor. In its absence, a storm is abroad more horrible than ever startled ocean's hardiest sons. But, O who can describe the extatic joys, which inspire those who have groped their way for years without one cheering beam of hope, or spark of glimmering day, when they come out upon prospects touched with divine penciling, lighted with this star of peace, the harbinger of all God's promised blessings! With what unutterable satisfaction and pleasure they gaze upon this token of a Saviour's love, as it lights them along in the path of duty, and, walking in its brightness, ushers them into the presence of him who lit it up in the moral heavens to be our guide to endless bliss.

THE VOICE OF CONSOLATION.

This world is not our home; here we have no continuing city. We are therefore daily reminded by the passing occurrences of life, that we must hasten our

preparations to depart and be with Christ which is far better. This world is also full of affliction. From the cradle to the grave, we are hurried along through trying scenes ; disappointments and bereavements, almost without number, harass us on our journey, and throw around us a settled gloom—which the sunny rays of hope can scarcely pierce. But, notwithstanding we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, passing through a wilderness alternately dark and light, with here and there a green spot on which to repose, we are not without hope. No, blessed be God, there is a voice that reaches us louder than the roar of the tempest, and in the still night sweeter than the music of angels. This voice comes from the throne of God. It is tuned to the sympathies of the suffering ones, and its language is the eloquence of mercy, when she appears stretching out her wings over suffering humanity, and soothing the bosom of the weary and the disconsolate. We have an almighty friend. He it is who superintends all our affairs, conducts us safely through life, and orders all for our best good. On this rock we may rest in hope and fear nothing. He never chastises his children willingly, nor burdens them beyond endurance. God is love ; here let us rally our spirits, and while we utter this consoling passage, let every warring passion be still. If we are sufferers, bowed down under the chastisements of our heavenly Father ; if we are writhing under the pangs of a smitten heart, broken off from all that is held dear upon earth ; if the world looks like a blank to us, a shadow, and all within the compass of our vision, hopeless and de-

sponding ; yet thanks to that Great Being who sitteth at the helm, there is a remedy—and, through the Son of his love, *a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for our fears*. All is not lost ; the grave has not entirely withered our hopes. He who hath commissioned the angel of death to disturb our peace, can by his presence, soothe our sorrows, and sweeten the bitter cup he has put to our lips. He can—nay, he has,—O yes, thou afflicted one, cast down and not comforted, be of good cheer, the Master has called for thee. He commands thee to put on thy beautiful garments, and his commands are enforced by the gentle assurances of his paternal regards. He breathes into thy heart the pleasant calm of a quiet and resigned mind, and kindles up the distant vista with the lights of virtue and religion, and bids thee tread lightly and pleasantly in thy future journeyings, till the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof arrive, and thou wingest thy happy flight to the paradise of God, where sorrow and sighing flee away, and the weary are forever at rest.

THE RETROSPECT.

As we stand on the borders of the new year, and look back upon the past, O what a multitude of weighty considerations arise to induce us to husband our time for the future, and to prepare for the closing year of our lives !

The year, now just closing, presents a dreary picture to the careless. It is pregnant with useful lessons. Let us then review the traces it has left behind, and the ruins of the beautiful temples it has laid low. The grave now covers thousands who commenced the expiring year with bright prospects, rich in this world's gain, and flushed with health, animation and hope ! Little did many a father, who now sleeps in the silent tomb, dream, at the opening of the present year, that he should be called so soon to bid adieu to his darling babes. Hundreds who stood on its threshold, attired in the gay drapery of fashionable folly, are wrapped up in the muffler and winding sheet ; the dew falls heavily on their low couch ; the worm riots on the damask cheek, and the long grass waves over their hard pillow. O, how death has gorged himself ! The young, the beautiful, the proud, the gay—son and sire, matron and maid, have rolled down the tide—have been swept away and are not. What multitudes have been driven away in their sins, without a moment's warning, unannealed into the presence of their Judge ! What death bed scenes have been witnessed where the horrors of awakened consciences have been too harrowing even to think of, much less to depict ! How many have been smitten down in the very act of rebellion against the Almighty, and while, with impudent effrontery, they were violating his laws and imprecating dreadful curses upon their own devoted heads. And has death only been busy ? Has not a long train of miseries afflicted our world since the commencement of the year ? Behold the children of want and

wretchedness ! Within a few brief months their sunny prospects have changed ; their friends have disappeared, and hunger and nakedness now stare them in the face. Go through the prisons—see those dungeoned wretches. The present year rose upon many of them in peace ; they were surrounded with plenty in the bosom of home, and shone in the domestic circle. O, how they are fallen ! how changed ! how degraded ! See yonder proud vessel, like a thing of life, sweeping over the blue wave. Ah, there goes the widow's hope, the mother's joy. Her heart bleeds and longs for his return. Alas ! a yawning billow has swallowed up her darling idol, and she goes down to the grave in sorrow.

But what import has *our* conduct borne to the skies ? What retrospect can we take of the past year ? Is it not before God, written as it were with sunbeams ? There, our actions have been already approved or condemned. Have we been spendthrifts, squandering without reflection, our precious moments ? Has our improvement been proportioned to the labor and vast expense that have been laid out upon us ? The great favors that have been showered upon us, how have *they* been requited ? How disproportionate our zeal and ardor to our knowledge, and the great demand that has been made upon our exertions ! What volumes of idle words have escaped us through the past year ! What a niggardly display of the charities and sympathies of the Gospel ! Where are our good fruits ? To what end and for what purpose have we been living ! How often have we staggered by reason

of unbelief, despised the cross, forgotten to deny ourselves, and trifled with our obligations, murmured at providence, neglected the means of grace, been cold in religious duties, indulged unholy tempers, unhallowed thoughts, and trampled upon the authority of Jehovah ! Our unfaithfulness has already summoned justice to her work. The fiery sword waves over the guilty, while a voice like the sound of many waters and mighty thunderings, cries aloud, *cut them down !* And shall this year end our probation ? Is the door of mercy closing against us forever ? Is the fearful harbinger of death knocking for entrance, to deliver his message and sound the alarm in our ears, *this year thou shalt die !*—O let us hasten to the foot of the cross ! See that mangled form ; hear that pleading voice—Father forgive them—Spare them this year also.—Did ever sounds more thrilling, more cheering, fall upon the soul of the condemned ! Shall we dare to live another moment without God ?—O that the closing year may witness our rebellious hearts broken—melted and subdued !

THE BIBLE.

The volume of inspiration teaches the purest and holiest lessons, in the simplest language, yet elevated far above the highest pitch of human thought. The doctrines and precepts which it inculcates are strict and

moulded to perfection, defining our duty with accuracy, associated with sanctions and authorities unquestionable in their nature, and secure from the folly and the wrath of man. It does no violence to the best feelings of the pure heart. It offers no hindrance to true enjoyment. It requires nothing from our hands, but what must, in the issue, tend to our highest good.

The Bible, when permitted to speak, fills the soul with conceptions immeasurably grand. Its rich and mellow tones harmonize the mind and raise it to the region of celestial beauty. The breath of heaven is in the air. The turbulent passions are hushed. Myriads of the blest crowd around the enraptured soul, and the very elements seem charmed, while the Eternal holds audience with his creature, man.

Oh, it is our best and most constant friend—always the same, and ever on the giving hand. And wherever its visits have been cordially received, its presence hailed with joy, and due respect paid to its kind and unwearied exertions in our behalf,—there a second Eden hath sprung up—there the social circle, and the domestic hearth, are blessed. The milk of human kindness, mingling with the crystal stream of life, is sweetened—and the charities and sympathies of our nature are expanded. There the hopes of immortality shine out brightly and beautifully. In short, all, yes, all that man can want, or desire, or hope, to render his state here happy, beyond description happy, and to secure him a safe and welcome admission into the kingdom of glory, is found in this one blessed volume. But do we prize it as we ought—or is it less to

us than the light, airy and inconstant trifles of a sickly hour? If we have not taken it to our hearts, and pressed it to our lips, and journeyed by its light, and ensured its smiles and favor,—in the dark day of adversity, and in the view of death, we shall find ourselves condemned, full of the bitterest regrets, destitute of true consolation, and shall turn to its long neglected pages with a mournful apprehension that we are undone forever.

THE MINISTERIAL CHARACTER.

The minister of Jesus Christ, who would be truly acceptable to the people of his charge, an honor to the cause of God, and a blessing to the world, should be an experienced christian, a humble and sincere follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. He must prefer his Bible to all other books, and the system of divinity taught in it to every other system. He should be honest, dignified, independent, free from the imputation of immorality, ignorance, or superstition. He should possess simplicity of character, that he may be an ensample to others; firm—unmoved—not driven about by every wind of doctrine. A knowledge of all disputable points in every religious creed, and an acquaintance with mankind, are absolutely necessary lest he should be off his guard when assaulted, or if armed and on the watch, he should be tempted to insult his

foe instead of honorably defending simply the interests of truth. He should be intimately acquainted with himself, otherwise he may overrate his powers and talents, and fall into the condemnation of Satan. Above every thing else, because without it every other talent will be an instrument of ruin, he must have a flaming love for the glory of God and the welfare of mankind, and count all things else but loss, comparatively, for the excellency of winning souls to Christ.

THE WORLD.

The world is a formidable foe to the christian, because of its fascinating and seductive appearance. Its allurements, enchantments and painted baubles, catch the eye, gratify the palate, and please the imagination. The serpent's blandishments are put forth only to attract the unwary traveller to his ruin.—So the world, invites but to destroy, kisses only to betray, and embraces like the assassin, to make more sure the murderous stab. The honors and the riches of the world are calculated to mislead the christian warrior from his high vocation. They wind themselves around the heart, become almost necessary to his existence, and shut out God and heaven from his view. High sounding titles, splendid establishments, immense revenues, literary honors and popular commendation, damp the zeal and clip the wings of the heavenly aspirant

after the mind that was in Jesus. All these things may not be deemed absolutely incompatible with a religious life, but they are certainly dangerous companions, and few there are, who entirely escape from the snares which they lay for the soul. The christian should ever be on the alert to grapple with this foe, subdue its domineering influence, and keep it in due subjection. Nothing less than a firm reliance on divine aid, and a sincere attachment to the cause of Christ, will enable us to overcome the world.

THE DEATH BED.

How sad and lonely the couch where the emaciated form is stretched, uncheered by the dawns of eternal day! Over the poor, unhappy, wasted clay, no starlight brightens, no cherub wings are hovering. In vain are the arms of friendship extended, the bosom of love opened.—The rays of hope may gleam a brief moment on the horizon of mind, but they are cold and cheerless. No vivifying influence passes over the feverish brain—no holy gust of ecstatic joy fills, supports, entrances the soul. Oh, it is hard dying, when the consolations of religion are wanting—when the past, the present, the future bring in the dreadful sentence *that all is lost*,—when no uplifted arm makes strong the inner man while the outward man falls into ruins. But oh! how soft the bed of death! what easy,

pleasant dying, when the comfortable assurances of God's word are brought home to the stricken one in language that cannot be misunderstood. When the soul, feeling after the promises, clinging to the Rock of ages, and rising up in the strength of the Lord of hosts, grapples with the monster on ground consecrated by the Son of God, and prevails, and triumphs ! It is then that man looks upon the fallen pillars in which he had once gloried, with a smile, and beholds unmoved the crumbling tabernacle ; while new fledged, he breaks his bonds, and flies away to dip his pinions in the font of uncreated light.

“————— Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace ! how calm his exit !
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary, worn out winds expire so soft.”

A PORTRAIT.

Look at the bloated figure of the professed voluptuary, even in his youth. Where are those intellectual powers that once rendered him the ornament of society ? They withered and decayed when he forsook the path of virtue, and mocked alike the admonitions of heaven, and the monitory voice of conscience. In the prime of life he has the appearance and infirmities of old age. His hand is already palsied and he can scarcely lift to his lips the sparkling cup in which he

takes his supreme delight. He is now rendered incapable of performing the social and relative duties of life. He may have been a high minded, intelligent citizen, on whom his country turned a confiding look. But he has rendered himself incapable of legislating in her halls or counselling in her cabinet. Sin has ruined him—despoiled him of his fairest jewels, and left him a ruined man, almost like Lucifer, never to hope again. The finer sensibilities of the soul are dead ; alive only to self gratification and self degradation, he becomes a common nuisance—a disgrace to society, an emblem of misery and wretchedness. Is he a father ? his unfortunate children soon experience the dreadful consequences of his thoughtless behavior. The partner of his joys and sorrows is cruelly neglected, abused and broken spirited,—the dear pledges of their early love forgotten, their education suffers loss, their morals are destroyed, and the foundation laid in their young and inexperienced hearts for a course similar to the horrible example continually before their eyes. Has he parents ? Perhaps his mother is a widow, and he her only son, her only stay and support. Poor wretch ! and will he stab the heart which throbs to embrace him—plant thorns in the bosom that would be his pillow, his home ? O horrible ! What—rob the poor widow of her last, her only joy ! Deprive her of the staff with which she expected to have trodden the last stage of her wearisome pilgrimage upon earth ! Trace another and a deeper furrow on her time worn cheek ; press the tear of sorrow from her hollow eyes ; dash the cup of mercy from her shrivelled lip—monstrous !

O, how many parents are crushed to the earth by their wicked children, and sink to an untimely grave, their hearts rung with grief and agony by the imprudence and madness of the youth they once doated upon, and fondled within their arms.

THE GLORY OF GOD.

Jacob at Peniel, and Gideon under the oak, when they beheld only some faint glimmerings of the divine majesty, expressed themselves alarmed and ashamed. Wo is me, for I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. The law was proclaimed in thunder and lightning ; circumstances of pomp and splendor attended its annunciation, but the Deity remained in thick darkness. His will was announced, but his peculiar glory was not revealed. Go not up, said he, into the mount,—no, nor touch the border of it, lest ye perish. When the affrighted Israelites saw but a few rays of his glory on the face of Moses, they were dazzled with their brightness, and could not endure the sight without the interposition of a veil. A glimpse of the divine glory overpowered Peter on the mount of transfiguration—and no wonder. Heaven is God's throne and the earth only his footstool ; the one is the holy of holies, the other the outer court of his temple. The cherubim and seraphim veil their faces in his presence, and are not able to pierce through the

resplendent majesty by which he is irradiated. And if the Eternal is incomprehensible to the highest orders of intelligent beings ; if they cannot look and live, what hopes should we have of arriving at any just conceptions of the divine glory. A voice from the most holy place says to us,—what Christ said to Mary at the sepulchre,—*touch me not.*

RELIANCE ON GOD.

I will look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my salvation ;
my God will hear me.

The prophet, under the influence of divine inspiration, fixes an intense gaze upon the Lord, believing that he is the rewarder of all them who diligently seek him. He feels sensible of his weakness and inability to accomplish any thing of himself. Abstracted from men and means, he is lifted above the world, and, piercing the impalpable veil, rises to contemplations of a purely celestial nature. He looks into the eternal world with astonishment, with admiration, and love. What wouldest thou have me to do ? is the spontaneous questioning of his heart. Speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth, is his language. He cries out, like Thomas, convinced and overwhelmed with the grandeur of his conceptions, my Lord and my God !

The prophet waits for the God of his salvation.

Having fixed his eyes upon the elevated and inimitable perfections of Deity, he patiently waits, full of expectancy and desire. His mind reaches away beyond the everlasting hills. Arriving upon the confines of the better world, the enraptured one awaits the heavenly anointing.

The prophet's faith triumphs over every difficulty. My God will hear me, is his spirited and confident conclusion. My God—his words are strong, full of assurance; they are highly expressive of the confirmed character of his faith. It wavers not. Deeply founded in the knowledge he had obtained of the unchangeableness and faithfulness of his God, he resolves to look to him only, patiently to await his coming, and implicitly believe, without wavering, the word of promise.

THE CHANGE OF WORLDS.

“ Though I walk through the gloomy vale,
Where death and all its terrors are,
My heart and hope shall never fail,
For God my shepherd's with me there.”

The shafts of death fall thick around us, and this charming world, like the field of strife, is strewn with the dead and the dying. The mourners go about the streets; they follow the young, the lovely, the beautiful, and the good, to their long home—the cold and

silent grave. The mournful knell chimes to their measured pace, and mingles its sepulchral tones with the burst of sorrow. But in all the circumstances of wo, attendant on the departure of those we love from the busy scenes of life, there is, to the christian, much consolation, when he feels assured that they have witnessed a good confession. Seeing they have escaped the storms and billows of life's tempestuous sea, and conscious that they are safe in the port of endless bliss, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest, we feel resigned—knowing that our loss is their infinite gain. Indeed, we rejoice, rather than mourn; for truly our separation will be but a very short one, and our meeting with happy connexions, O, how joyful! Then shall we breathe our native air, taste the fruit of that delightful clime where all is fertile, and rich, and fragrant. Among the many evidences of the power of christianity nothing can be more convincing than the last hours of a dying saint who bears a bright testimony to the truth of its doctrines. What a sublime scene! Behold him on the margin of the river, wrapped about with the garments of salvation, and preparing to step into its cold waters. He enters, singing as he goes. The ministering angels pilot him over. He gains the opposite shore. Sister spirits welcome him home. He joins the celestial company. He mounts, he flies, he soars. He reaches his eternal home. He is forever at rest.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

None of these things move me.

The history of the apostle Paul illustrates the beauty of an entire reliance on the divine will. The calm spirit of religion soothed his mind and animated his language. The passions of the soul, its secret workings, were conspicuously displayed by his unrivalled pen. He appeared to anticipate the horrors that awaited his arrival at Jerusalem with composure. The pages of his itinerary had been too often blotted with the sorrows and sufferings attendant upon his reception at various other places, not to exhibit strong premonitions of what was in store for him there. And yet, he exclaims with the undaunted spirit by which the martyr is characterised, none of these things move me. Ever since the persecution and death of Jesus, his followers have been opposed and persecuted, and to this day, persecutions attend the steps of every true follower of Christ. No cross, no crown—is still the motto on the christian's escutcheon. He who lives godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution,—is the testimony of Scripture.

The apostle Paul was a citizen of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was educated in the university for which that place was famous, and became distinguished for his knowledge in the liberal sciences. His studies were completed in Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, a doctor of eminence among the Jews.

He soon commenced his career of glory, and entered the list a decided enemy to the religion of the cross. While journeying to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Lord's anointed, he was arrested.—A light from heaven shone around him, unhorsed the vaunting persecutor, and unnerved his proud arm.—He fell to the earth, and trembling, cried out, who art thou, Lord ; convinced and humbled, he sued for mercy, obtained forgiveness and became a champion of the religion he had once openly despised and rejected.

Paul was a man of no common stamp. In the formation of his mind, nature fully atoned for the weakness of his external appearance. His literary acquirements were of a superior order. Aware of these advantages, he flattered himself with the most brilliant success among his countrymen. But from the moment he associated himself with the fishermen of Galilee, all these high hopes vanished ; the clouds of adversity and of sorrow lowered on his path. His reputation was assailed—his good name cast away—the tongue of scandal consigned him to obloquy and contempt, and though he once appeared in the eyes of the world without a blemish, yet, in consequence of his attachment to the new religion, he became a by-word, a term of reproach, and his labors to promote the welfare of Zion, a never failing theme of animadversion and ridicule. There was also given him a thorn in the flesh. His brethren proved false to him ; many of his friends forsook him ; his spiritual children did him much harm. In pain, in wretchedness, in fastings, in excessive and

laborious travels, through morasses, extensive and barren wastes, over rugged mountains, burning sands and across rapid streams and rivers, oft times without a shelter, a home or friend, the bare ground his couch, a stone his pillow, and the blue expanse his canopy, frequently without food, or the common comforts and necessities of life, he toiled in his master's cause.

None of these things moved him. He had suffered persecutions unequalled, and was ready to suffer more. Conscious of the rectitude of his motives in promoting the cause of Christ, he appeals to his brethren, and declares that he is pure from the blood of all men. Having a conscience void of offence, he relies with implicit confidence in his God, clinging to his promises and casting the anchor of his hope within the veil. In all his trials, troubles and afflictions, the assistance he had received from heaven was wonderful. He had partaken largely of the divine influences, the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and was sustained by a firm, well grounded hope that could not be shaken. He knew that all these afflictions were but for a moment, and that after a few more wearisome days and wakeful nights, yonder portals would open wide, and shining hosts of bright, seraphic spirits, with loudest hallelujahs, would welcome him home. With this prospect before him, he heroically determined to persevere in the path of difficulty and danger. He had received his credentials from a high source, and resolved to testify the gospel of the grace of God at all hazards, and to proceed upon his glorious mission, unmindful of the peltings of the pitiless storm, the jeers and scoffings of cruel

men, the roughness and dreariness of the way, or the voice of Cæsar, which thundered curses in his hearing.

The apostle was raised above the fear of death. His life, he declares, was not even dear unto him. In a short time after this noble expression of his entire devotedness to the cause of Christ, he was beheaded under that unmerciful and bloodthirsty tyrant, Nero, only a few years before the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. He finished his course with joy and received from the hands of his enemies the glorious crown of martyrdom.

THE DISSOLUTION.

The heavens shall pass away with a great noise. Although studded with ten thousand brilliant gems, it will be rolled up like a parchment scroll ; its lofty swelling arch will break down, and all its lights be quenched forever.

The elements shall melt with fervent heat. The principles of fire pervade the universe, and on many occasions it has already burst forth and given startling indications of a general and splendid conflagration ; but when the Almighty gives the word, it will no longer be confined to some insulated mountain—it will meet the eye in grandeur terrible and overwhelming from every quarter of the horizon. The drops of the morning dew will no longer fall in refreshing showers upon the

earth; in their stead will descend the floods of liquid flame to nourish the fires of the last conflagration. The whole earth will form one grand scene of ruin. The attractions of particles, the forces of repulsion and gravitation will be suddenly destroyed: The towering mountains, whose summits are frosted with eternal snows and veiled with misty clouds—those land marks of time which have breasted the storms of ages, will totter on their bases, and mingle in the general ruin.

The beauties of nature will then be blasted. Seasons will revolve no more. The woods and groves shall no longer be vocal with the warbling of the feathered songsters. Disrobed of all its charms, this fair and beautiful world will become the sport of raving elements, and fail in the mighty conflict.

The earth and all that is therein shall be burned up. All the works of art—the utmost efforts of human industry—stupendous fortresses—lordly edifices—the proud mausoleum—triumphal arches—towering pyramids—monumental pillars—the statues of warriors and statesmen,—all that is engaging to worldly minded men, shall fail from the earth.

When all these shall be dissolved, the trumpet of the Gospel will no more be heard in Zion—her earthly mountain will be forsaken—her altars thrown down—her temples destroyed. Judah's fountain will be sealed up, and the river of life cease to flow for the healing of the nations.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The royal Psalmist was deeply convinced of his need of the Spirit's teaching when he said, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Teach me thy statutes ; make me to understand the way of thy precepts. Our Lord, in the simple but cutting language of truth, enforced the same doctrine upon Nicodemus, in his memorable conversation with that expounder of the law. The ruler's ignorance is easily accounted for, on the ground of his having never been acquainted with the spirituality and beauty of the holy Scriptures. The natural man, says Paul, receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. In his letter to the Ephesians he prays, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of their understanding being enlightened ; that they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

The history of the Jewish nation is one continued series of evidences in favor of the doctrine we are attempting to illustrate. The true Shekinah was not discerned by them even in their most solemn assemblies ; and when they seemed most engaged in their ceremonial worship and religious observances, the one

thing needful was still lacking. The Son of God, although he appeared among them in the fulness of time, according to the prophets, and at the precise moment when the whole world anticipated his coming, working miracles and performing signs and wonders daily before their eyes, failed in rousing them to a realizing sense of their need of something more than the mere naked form of religion.

The wise Greeks mocked Paul and ridiculed the resurrection of the dead as an absurdity. Their character and conduct in regard to religious matters prove most satisfactorily the necessity of divine assistance in order to understand revealed truths. The fathers of the Greek philosophy had obtained information from the books of Moses which should have taught them better. But where shall we find unassisted reason arriving at certainty in these high and holy things? Can we fathom that which is fathomless? Who by searching can find out God? What mortal arm can reach his high abode? The Deity is beyond our reach—our knowledge is circumscribed and imperfect. We are poor atoms, scarcely visible in the wonderful variety of God's works, lost in the splendor and magnitude of the whole; poor insignificant worms, treading the dust and dwelling in tabernacles of clay. How should we expect to know any thing unless it should be taught us of God?

The disciples of Jesus, even while their beloved Lord was yet with them, were ignorant and unbelieving. His character and offices, his kingdom and work—they could not comprehend until their under-

standings were opened. What an eminent example among many is the apostle of the Gentiles, who from a bold persecutor, ignorant of the spirituality of God's holy law, full of persecuting zeal, became sensible of his darkness, blindness and need of divine teaching. The conversion of La Harpe, a name high in the ranks of modern infidelity, is a flaming proof of the necessity and the power of the Holy Spirit's influence and teaching. I might add that of him upon the cross,—the robber and reviler, suddenly changed by a look from that holy one whom he had mocked.

The holy Scriptures cannot be understood without divine teaching. They were given by inspiration. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Although they are intended for our instruction in righteousness, yet there are certain ways by which alone they can be approached to be understood, appreciated and felt. The reason is obvious; being wholly unlike all human compositions, ordinary rules cannot reach them. By the light of reason we may solve difficult and knotty questions, unravel mysteries in the kingdoms of nature and of science, become intimately acquainted with the laws by which they are governed, and the principles in which these laws are founded. But on the subject of the holy Scriptures the highest flights of genius, the towering grandeur of superior intellect, should sink deep into the abysses of their own nothingness. The Bible, like the eagle in its flight, mocks alike the eye of impertinent curiosity, and the archer's skill. Conjecture often supplies the place of certainty, and poor, proud man,

confounded, bewildered—instead of owning the divinity of the arm that has stayed his adventurous footsteps, thwarted his presumptuous gaze, oftentimes puts on haughty looks of defiance and scorn. But he who comes in the appointed way, and falls prostrate before the God of the Bible, rejects every proud boast, and humbly implores the aid of the Holy Spirit, he will arise with a mind resuscitated and enlarged, prepared to enter into the deep things of God, and refresh himself at the waters of this holy spring. The dews of heavenly grace will fall gently and in abundance upon his heart. A light from the holy place will guide him through every dark and devious path; the clouds of ignorance will break away, and the deep toned thunders of remorse and guilt cease to summon justice to her work.

The sacred treasures of the Gospel cannot be obtained without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. If we have not the spirit of Christ we are none of his. How dreadful to be an alien from the kingdom of his grace and love! But be of good cheer. The voice of mercy sounds from afar; it falls like the music of angels upon our world. The spirit of truth is come, he will guide us through every maze and illumine every dark place. If any lack wisdom, ask of God and it shall be given. Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. How infinitely kind and condescending is the Almighty, who is so willing to guide and teach his poor sinful creatures. Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

And if you being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

THE MIND.

The mind of man, when nicely scrutinized, exhibits the most astonishing phenomena. It possesses the features of a divine origin. How wonderful and multiplied are its powers! The understanding perceives, the will rules, the operations of the mind develop a variety of emotions, generally termed affections, or passions. The understanding is intimately connected with thought, imagination, memory and conscience. The will, unites with choice, desire and determination; and in the train of the affections and passions flow love and hatred, joy and grief, meekness, and hope, and fear. All these, though we should pronounce them, at the first glance, separate and distinct powers or faculties of the soul independent of each other, are but one simple, uncompounded principle, putting forth its energies in a variety of forms.

THE WARNING VOICE.

It is heard over all the earth. It rolls conviction on the conscience and burdens the soul with grief, filling

the mind with dreadful forebodings of ill. It is the voice of heaven, and is a merciful indication of the great interest the Almighty feels for man. At times, its hollow and deep tones pierce through the well guarded palace, and are heard amid the roar of mirth and the voice of song. Again it speaks in a still, subdued and mellow tone, sweeping over the chords of the heart, like the soft breathings of the Æolian harp, awakening memory from her slumbers. It is never silent. Its purpose is always the same. It is in vain to shut our ears against its counsel; for it enters unbidden every avenue of the human heart, and is heard clearly and distinctly in its deepest recesses, when no sound reacheth the outer man. It has the power to force itself on our most retired moments. We cannot escape its all pervading presence, or pretend ignorance of its object and end. Whether we sleep or wake, however we may be employed by night or day, it is ever thundering in our ears the words of truth—loudly, faithfully and affectionately warning us to flee the wrath to come.

THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST.

The holy Scriptures describe the office and duty of the ministers of Jesus Christ by a great variety of strong and significant metaphors—all pointing out with clearness the end and design of the christian ministry and its necessary qualifications.

Ministers are the lights of the world. Before them the dark night of delusion rolls away. In their presence the light of truth springs up, and knowledge increases. On the path to happiness and heaven they pour the sunshine of the Gospel, and array all the doctrines of the cross in such beautiful order that many are induced to fall in love with them, and turn into the way everlasting. They spread themselves over the enthralled and benighted world, becoming bright beams to the disconsolate, the shipwrecked of hope, and the dying.

They are stars of magnitude and of glory, shining clearly and steadily in the moral firmament.

They are stewards of the mysteries of God. It is required of all stewards that they be skilful and faithful in the discharge of their office. The truths of divine revelation, the ordinances of the sanctuary, are concerns of no small moment. They are to exhibit the ground and necessity of an evangelical belief, and the legitimate connexion that exists between the faith of the Gospel, unprejudiced reason, and sound morality, in promoting the best interests of man here and hereafter. They are faithful—which implies truth, diligence and integrity. They are models of truth; steady adherents to the religion of Jesus, stern patriots of the kingdom of the Redeemer—seeing that they must shortly give an account of their stewardship before assembled millions.

THE RETURN OF SPRING.

“ Sweet is the breath of spring, divinely sweet,
With charm of earliest birds.”

This is the sweetest season of the whole year. There is a joyful elasticity about it, which cheers and invigorates the mind. When it first makes its visit, if the body is too sensitive to its lively touches, and droops a moment under its influence, it is but to prepare itself to meet the glowing summer which treads upon its fairy footsteps. There are but few who do not feel, amidst all the luxurious tresses with which spring wreathes her bright, fair brows, an unusual pressure,—arising from the sudden unbracing of the constitution, which undergoes nearly as great a change as the vegetable kingdom itself. But the system soon regains its natural tone, and rises up out of its feebleness to drink in the nectar of the gentle zephyrs, loaded with ambrosial sweets.

The return of spring awakens universal nature from her dreary sleep, and animates and gives a voice to all her works. It is a fresh cause of gratitude, and should elevate the soul and draw out the affections to that great and good being, who conducts the seasons in their rounds. Yes, our hearts should be lifted up to him whose bountiful hands have covered the earth with its green carpet, fringed it with a rich drapery, and enriched it with necessary food for man and beast. The earth is one of his palaces, spread out and fashioned by the great architect himself, to display his power and show his mercy. He has loaded every

department of it with his richest gifts ; and above all, he has spread over it the broad banner of his love and beneficence.

But spring is not to last always ; summer's glories will soon blaze upon the earth to be succeeded by the soberness of autumn and the desolations of winter.

But have we not a moral here ? Will not man himself be changed ? O yes, the spring tide of his days will roll away, and death, like a cruel ruffian, will wreak his vengeance on him. His beautiful and noble form, so firm and elevated, will fall beneath his powerful stroke, and mingle like the autumnal leaf with the cold earth. Yet even in this sad change there still is hope. There is a spirit in man, and the vivifying influence of the sun of righteousness will save it from the cold touch of icy fingers, and another and more glorious spring shall open on the disembodied one—where perennial joys abide, where brilliant scenes are never darkened, and flowerets of the softest, purest dyes are ever blooming, ever fair and sweet.

“ O yes, there's a harbor of pleasant repose,
Where joy ever carols, and spring ever blows ;
A land from all sorrow and weariness free—
A country, my Saviour, has promised to me.”

PRESUMPTION.

The principal object of the greatest part of mankind is gain—the gain of this world, not the treasures that are at God's right hand. Never satisfied, they

heap up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets, joining house to house and field to field. Their worldly engagements are so numerous and perplexing, they can afford no time for reflection. The acts of piety and devotion, and the duties of religion, are postponed to a convenient season. The great Lord of all occupies no place in their affections;—their thoughts never rise higher than the pelf of earth. Every plan they form is pronounced good, and, in imagination, the future is crowned with rich harvests—the fruits of their mercantile sagacity and prudent calculations; while they enter in their own minds a general insurance against danger, change and death. When any of their waking dreams are realized, they audaciously attribute their success to their own skilful management. Their arrogance and presumption rise in proportion to their prosperity in business. Indeed, they regard every event in life as dependant on their own will. Like the Persian monarch, they look down upon the world as their humble servant, and consider its riches and honors as tributary only to their own imaginary importance. Such conduct is presumptuous; it is a treason to the rights of heaven. It bears on its front the marks of the curse. It is an insult to the majesty of God.

RURAL RETIREMENT.

There are certain seasons when retirement from the world and its tormenting cares is not only pleasant but

beneficial. Holy men have, in every age, delighted in abstracting themselves from the gross pursuits of life, to converse with their own hearts, and acquaint themselves with the nature and end of their being. The shady and retired walk, the tufted hill, the babbling brook, have been visited by the contemplative and the religious, with feelings that accord with the aspirations of celestial spirits. The works of nature are a rich treasury on which we may draw without satiety or disgust. The sun shining in his strength, passing in majesty and glory through the heavens—the earth with its ever varying surface, reflecting the ardent blaze and tempering with its verdant green the too ardent ray—the feathered choir in their glossy plumage, tinted with the richest colorings, filling the air with melodious warblings,—all these instruct and please. They cheer the humble and breathe consolation into the afflicted bosom. They are the lively emblems of the divine goodness—they are types of beauty and grandeur. As proofs of God's existence, they appeal with irresistible force and eloquence to the understanding and the heart. Although the volume of nature is open to every rational and intelligent being, its bright pages teeming with interest and instruction, yet many causes concur in blinding our eyes to the characters written there by a divine hand. Retirement for a season from the busy world will assist in comprehending them ; and when indulged with proper motives, is favorable to every social and endearing virtue. It is a good preparation for the exercise of the nobler affections of the mind. It refines the

grosser passions ; awakens sublime contemplations, and refines the whole man into a new and etherial mould.

THE JUBILEE.

“ The year of jubilee is come ;
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.”

The year of jubilee was observed among the Jews every fiftieth year. The word jubilee, signifies the sounding of a trumpet. Notice was given of its approach on the evening of atonement, and every Israelite was obliged to sound the trumpet nine times. The arrival of the jubilee produced an instantaneous emotion throughout Palestine and Judea. If an Israelite from necessity or any other cause had sold his property, the year of jubilee restored it to him, for the land, says the Lord, is mine, and if he had sold himself, he was made free in this year ; for, says God, they are my servants. When the joyful sound swept over Canaan, announcing the jubilee, the doors of every prison flew open ; the poor captive was free, and the bondman set out for his native inheritance to enjoy liberty, plenty and peace. Their privileges, their property, their reputation, their standing among their brethren and kindred, their all, were restored to them without fee, favor or reward. It was a joyful season. Trumpets sounding from the tops of houses and in all the public places—the daughters of music swelling the

universal shout of praise with harp and tabret, timbrel and dance ;—fetters falling off, dungeon doors flying open and poor prisoners rushing forth, clapping their hands and rejoicing. The streets were thronged with the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, bounding along and almost frantic with joy. The highways were crowded with venerable parents, and little children,—husbands and wives, friends and relations running into each other's arms, while the air resounded with the songs of the delivered, and the acclamations of the multitude. What a striking and beautiful illustration of the blessed effects of sounding the Gospel trumpet.

THE RESTING PLACE.

So man lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more,
they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

However dark and disconsolate the path of life may have been to any man, there is an hour of deep and quiet repose at hand, when the body may sink into a dreamless slumber. Let not the imagination be startled, if this resting place, instead of the bed of down, shall be the bed of gravel, or the rocky pavement of the tomb. No matter where the poor remains of wearied man may lie, the repose is deep and undisturbed—the sorrowful bosom heaves no more—the tears are dried up in their fountains—the aching head is at rest, and the stormy waves of earthly tribulation

roll unheeded over the place of graves. Let armies engage in fearful conflict over the very bosoms of the pale nations of the dead, not one of the sleepers shall heed the spirit stirring trumpet, or respond to the rending shouts of victory.

How quiet these countless millions slumber in the arms of their mother earth. The voice of the thunder shall not awake them ; the loud cry of the elements—the winds, the waves, nor even the giant tread of the earthquake, as it overpasses the continents, shall be able to cause any inquietude in the chambers of death. They shall rest securely through ages ; empires shall rise and fall ; the bright millennium shall come and pass away ; the last great battle shall be fought ; and then a silver voice, at first but just heard, shall rise to a tempest tone, and penetrate the voiceless grave. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall hear his voice.

THE MINISTER'S CONSOLATION.

There is one man in society who willingly renounces the ease, the honors, the affluence of life, and spends his days in thankless labors, and his nights in pale watchings. Let an impartial observer note his movements, reason upon his motives of action, and the results at which he will arrive will often be contradictory and ever surprising. Can it be popularity at which he aims ? He does not walk in the path of those whose absorbing business it is to rise on the breath of popular

favor to some station of permanent honor. He continually employs himself in laying sin at the doors of a vast proportion of his friends and associates ; his flatteries are not thrown around society like a net to entangle the unwary ; he deals in matter of fact assertions, and is continually uncovering motives in the human heart at which man must blush and hide himself with shame ; pride meets a severe reproof in the mild eye that detects its most gentle swellings ; wickedness trembles under the searching glance which seems to forestall its doom ; the human heart lies naked before a fellow mortal ; and a tender, melancholy, yet upbraiding voice, charges innocent blood upon the self-righteous. Continually the accusation rises—ye have slain your Lord—ye have poured out the pure blood of the lovely Jesus, like water upon the earth ; and yet even this very blood, shed by your wicked hands, speaketh better things than the blood of your fellow man, the murdered Abel.

This certainly is no way to obtain the applause of men. The ambitious man, who steals the hearts of the multitude that he may place his foot upon their necks, knows of a better way to accomplish his designs than to lay the heavy charge of innocent blood against them, and press home its guilt with the loud roar of a law, broken and raising its stern voice to heaven for vengeance.

It cannot be wealth that the minister of the Gospel seeks for in his deep researches. He is not found on the exchange, where merchants congregate, and where fortunes are bought and sold. His bills of exchange

are pleadings in secret with the same Being who hears the shrill cry of the mountain raven, and the roar of the young lion. His riches are those gleams of hope which break into his soul in the stillness of night ; they come like streamers of light over a wide waste of shadows, and leave a deep feeling of immortality in the weaned heart that receives them. But no boisterous emotion of joy breaks out in thunders where these rays of glory concentrate. The loud hallelujah is reserved for the music of the upper world where it shall roll, like the voice of many waters, along the hills and vales of eternity.

It cannot be earthly pleasure after which he aspires. For his temperate habits and disregard of the light trifles of time prove that he has other objects supreme in his affections. Capable of entering with unbounded alacrity into the every day pursuits of this life, his thoughts seem to wander beyond them, and fasten their strong grasp upon unseen excellence. The dance and the viol are accompaniments of earthly pleasure ; the loud, thoughtless laugh, the jeer, the song, are reverberated through the halls of merriment. But the silent study is the minister's levee room, and he holds audience with those who have bitter sorrows to disclose.

Thus is sketched, with a feeble hand, the picture of a minister's deprivations—and, lest the shadowings of the pencil might give deep clouds to the prospect, no colorings of personal suffering have been added ; no envenomed shafts of a slanderous tongue fastened in the recesses of a sensitive heart ; no betraying

kisses ; no hungerings, thirstings, revilings, or seasons of spiritual destitution have been portrayed ;—for surely these are not a minister's consolations.

But his comforts break out like stars upon the gloom of night. Where a friend is bowed down under the parental discipline of his Heavenly Father, and kisses the rod of his chastisement, the minister sees the blessed effects of the correction, and rejoices that a bright proof of sonship is vouchsafed to a brother—for the Lord chastens those whom he loveth. His consolations arise oftentimes where the hopes of the world expire—they spring up in the pale chambers of death, and are doubled when the spirit, long tossed on the deceitful seas of life, comes gallantly into a harbor of glorious rest. Then, when mourning throws its sable over thousands, with his tears a joy kindles in the minister's heart, that one more soul is wafted from a rebellious world to a land of loud rejoicing and perfect peace.

The minister has a source of great consolation in the promises of God. He has, it is true, renounced the nobility and titles of earth, yet it is that he may wear a crown when this earth has passed away ; he leaves a lesser for a greater good ; he serves that he may reign. Taking God at his word, he drinks deep draughts of consolation at the fountain of the promises, and, in prospect, enjoys the happiness to come.

When the Spirit of God moves over the spiritual wastes of the world, and the vale of death shakes with the sound of reanimating life, the cup of a minister's happiness is running over. When political strife, the

emulation of great minds, and the untiring energies of business are suspended by the anxious inquiry—what must we do to be saved—his heart leaps for joy, and he is happy, thrice happy in his low estate, to handle the good word of God, and assort the jewels of eternal life.

But the most precious moments of his consolation on earth come when the sands of his life are numbered, and he experiences the truth of the blessed doctrines which he has spent his days in promulgating. The golden bowl breaks at the cistern, and the silver cord is loosened ; yet the earthly becomes heavenly even before eternity lifts the veil. It is a remark, founded in extensive experience, that a peculiar blessedness rests upon the last hours of faithful ministers, collectively considered—and a far greater amount of composure and deep religious peace is enjoyed by them than by the members of any other profession.

Should the infidel ask, with a sneer, what will a minister accomplish by all his holy living ?—the answer would be—he ensures his happy dying ; he meets a scene with calmness, joy and hope, even, at which the most haughty infidel turns pale and feels a deep inquietude. Yet this is not a selfish joy—an individual feeling of rescue merely ; but a thousand associations centre around this dying triumph, and lengthen the lines of his happiness. Like PAXSON, his gushing affections are poured out upon his blessed Saviour, and carry with them all whom his God has given him. He has passed through this vale of tears, and imparted purity to every mind with which he came in contact.

Associated with the most holy feelings, a thousand hearts—some on earth and some in heaven—bear his cherished remembrance ; and his voice comes up with the sinner's midnight musings. All this he feels, and although the wave of time through which he has passed shall soon close over him ; yet the weight of his talents, the flame of his zeal and the purity of his purpose, have parted the waters before him, and the world has acknowledged the weight of his influence.

Perhaps too, in the gloomy unfoldings of the cloud that hangs over the pale realms of death, a lovely, seraph face is seen, and the strong flashings of a crown in which are many stars ; and across the vexed horizon, the arch of God's promise shines with the rainbow colors of immortality, and ever and anon, ravishing symphonies wander from the paradise of song and fall upon his failing organs. The dark grave into which he enters is perfumed with the breath of Jesus ; and the minister lies down in hope of a glorious immortality.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

